

Beadle's BOYS' LIBRARY of Sport, Story and Adventure

Copyright, 1884, by Beadle & Adams. Entered at Post Office, New York, N.Y., as second class matter. Sept. 17, 1899.

No. 37.

*Published
Every Week.*

M. J. IVERS & CO., Publishers,
(James Sullivan, Proprietor.)
379 Pearl Street, New York.

Price 5 Cents.
\$2.50 a Year.

Vol. III.

Night-Hawk George, And his Daring Deeds and Adventures in the Wilds of the South and West.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.



Beadle's BOY'S LIBRARY of Sport, Story and Adventure

Copyright, 1884, by Beadle & Adams. Entered at Post Office, New York, N.Y., as second class matter. Sept. 17, 1899.

No. 37.

*Published
Every Week.*

M. J. IVERS & CO., Publishers,
(James Sullivan, Proprietor.)
379 Pearl Street, New York.

Price 5 Cents.
\$2.50 a Year.

Vol. III.

Night-Hawk George, And his Daring Deeds and Adventures in the Wilds of the South and West.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.



"NOW, RED-SKINS, YOUR ARROWS HAVE GOT TO BE SHARP TO GO THROUGH THIS TOMMY
BREASTWORK, SO FIRE AWAY!"

Night-Hawk George,*

And His Daring Deeds and Adventures in the Wilds of the South and West.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF "BUFFALO BILL," "WILD BILL,"
"TEXAS JACK," "BUCKSKIN SAM," "OLD
GRIZZLY ADAMS'S BOY PARD," "BRUIN
ADAMS," "EDDY BURGESS, THE
BOY CHIEF," "WHITE
BEAVER," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A BOY'S SOLILOQUY.

"WELL, what am I to do now?"

"Old Keating won't take me back to school after the thrashing I gave his son this morning, although he had his revenge on me.

"Whew! it smarts yet where the old man hit me, but I didn't wink even, for Bettie Low told me so, and I kinder turned my face so she could see me.

"But I guess Dan Keating would rather take the licking his father gave me than the one I gave him, for I hammered him well, I can tell you.

"And he deserved it, too, for sending that valentine to Bettie Low and signing my name to it, just to make her turn against me, for she believed that I wrote it until I beat him so that he confessed.

"Well, mother won't like my being expelled, for she wanted me to study hard and make a great man; but my education is ended at old Keating's, that is certain, and it is too far to go to any other school, so I guess I'll have to do as school Frank did, just strike out for myself.

"But where shall I strike for?"

"That's what bothers me.

"Let me see. I think I could get to be a boy herder in Texas, for I don't give in to anybody in riding.

"But Texas is a long way off; yet I can make it, and I've got sixty-seven dollars saved up, and my pony, and my gun and pistols, so I'm rich.

* Known also as "Texas Night-Hawk" and "The Prairie Wanderer," whose real name of George Powell has been almost dropped in the appellations he has won upon the far frontier.

George Powell is the brother of Dr. Frank Powell, known as "White Beaver," "Fancy Frank" etc., whose life was given in Boys' LIBRARY No. 37, and of William Powell, also called "Bronco Bill," "Dandy Will," etc., whose adventurous biography will soon be issued.

THE AUTHOR.

"Guess I'll go to Texas, but I mustn't let mother know, or she'd stop me.

"Brother Bill will stay with her, though, and when I save up my money and get a ranch I'll send for them.

"Yes, that is what I'll do—I'll go to Texas.

"Let me see. Mother is over at the Dodds' to-day, so I'll just fetch my saddle-bags, pistols and pony here, and leave them until to-night, when I can slip out and get many miles away by morning.

"Won't Bettie Low cry when I have gone?"

"But I'll write her a letter and leave it with one for mother, and that will cheer her up.

"Yes, and I must write Bill a letter, telling him to be a good boy and take care of mother.

"And while I'm writing I guess I'll drop a line to old Keating, and tell him that the whipping he gave me made a man of me.

"The old fellow has been telling me for two years to 'be a man! be a man!' and I guess he'll be glad I've followed his advice.

"Now I must get home and arrange for the trip."

As the speaker closed his soliloquy he walked rapidly away through a foot-path.

He was a boy of fifteen, with clear-cut features, dark complexion, and hair that was as black as ink.

His eyes were dark, restless, and full of fire, and his form was tall, slender, elegant, and yet denoted great strength.

His movements were quick, and somehow reminded one of an Indian, so stealthy was his tread, and so straight and wiry was his form.

He was dressed in a plain jean suit and "hickory" shirt, wore his pants stuck in his boot-tops, and a soft felt hat; but his toilet was considerably disarranged, for, as his words have told the reader, he had been fighting with a fellow school-mate, and then received a very severe thrashing from that student's father, who was the teacher of the country school.

Having been also ignominiously expelled, while "Keating's Kid," as the teacher's boy was called, was consoled with, the youth made up his mind to follow in the footprints of his elder brother Frank, who had left his home to make a name for himself.

"If I act square, work hard, and don't forget mother's teachings, I guess I can't go to the bad," he had argued in his favor, and with a good deal of truth, too, on his side.

His name was George Powell, and his home was in one of the wildest portions of New York State, at the time of which I write.

His family came of good stock, and there was a trace of Indian blood in his veins, for his mother's father had been a celebrated Indian chief.

His father being dead, the mother and her three sons had dwelt upon the little farm, until first Frank* had gone forth to seek his fortune, and now George was to follow.

As the youth, with his bag of books, and the accumulations of months in his desk, swung over his shoulder, walked away, a man arose from behind a huge rock and gazed after him.

The man's face was white and haggard, his clothing torn, and he had the appearance of being a vagabond and a fugitive.

"At last! at last! there is a chance open for me to elude my foes.

"The boy will bring his horse and arms to this spot to hide, and to-night will come for them, and he will have with him sixty-seven dollars.

"Oh, heaven! what a sum to a starving man.

"What a fortune—money, horse, and arms—for a hunted wretch.

"Boy, you have saved me; but you stay here, if I kill you, while I go to Texas."

The man then crouched back among the shrubs that grew about the rock, determined to bide his time until the coming of the boy.

Then he would act.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATIONS.

UPON reaching his home, which was nearly two miles from the school-house, but which distance George shortened by cutting through the forest, the boy found his younger brother, Billy, seated upon the piazza, nursing a sore foot, which had kept him from being a participant in the exciting affair with the Keatings, father and son.

In a few words, George told Billy all, and was listened to most attentively by that youth, who said:

"I am glad you licked Dan, George, for he deserved it, and as for a thrashing from old Keating, I don't mind 'em."

The latter was true, for Bill had been often the recipient of such attentions from the school-teacher, for he was a very mischievous boy, and took upon himself the blame, where smaller boys, or girls were accused, when he was really innocent.

Billy had also invented, though he had not patented it, a leather undershirt, which he wore regularly, in anticipation of trouble, and the result of which was that he could wink at the boys, while Mr. Keating was laying the raton on the hardest; unless, as was sometimes the case, the whip found a vital point not covered by the ingeniously manufactured hide garment.

Then Billy would wince, perhaps, but never cry out, and Mr. Keating had a hundred times said:

"Those Powell boys have hides like elephants and the game of Indians."

"Well, George, what are you going to do about it?" asked Billy.

"I will not let you know yet, Billy, but you just wait," was the reply.

Billy thought that "just wait" implied a threat of coming trouble for old man Keating and his hopeful, and he said:

"Well, I'll be with you, George, whatever it is."

George then went to his room to pack up for his journey.

He had a belt of arms, as fine as any Texas Ranger could have desired, and these he carefully cleaned, loaded the two revolvers, and laid them aside.

Then he overhauled his wardrobe, and got out his Sunday suit, boots and hat.

His spurs were then brushed up until they shone like gold, and his blankets, a red and a gray one, were rolled up and strapped.

A pair of calf-skin saddle-bags, with the hairy side out, were then hauled out from a closet, and filled with a couple of shirts, some under-clothing, socks, ammunition, a tin cup, plate, fork and knife, and a few other odds and ends that he expected to find needful.

Then the boy, with tear-dimmed eyes sat down to write to his mother.

He told her that he believed he was doing right, and would never forget her teachings, and soon as he was able would have her come to him wherever he had his home.

A letter to Billy, full of advice, followed, and then he wrote to Bettie Low, and that young maid, who, like her sex, was at the bottom of the trouble, was informed that he would be true to her until death.

Calling to Billy, and telling him it was time to drive over to a neighbor's after his mother, who was nursing an invalid, George waited his departure, and then slipping a small revolver, a present from his brother Frank, into his jacket pocket, shouldered his traps and left the house, unseen by the servant woman.

He reached the rock in safety, near which he had stood and indulged in his soliloquy, and then concealed the things in the bushes.

Returning home he set to work getting his saddle and bridle in perfect trim, and feeding and rubbing down his pony for the hard ride before him, for he intended to push ahead until morning.

As the stable was locked every night by the farm hand, George led his pony out, and he too was concealed in the forest, near his traps.

To his joy, Billy returned to say his mother would remain away all night, as the invalid was worse, and then the boys had supper, after

* Now the famous Medicine Chief "White Beaver."

which, as was his wont, his brother went to bed, while George pretended to read, though his eyes were too dimmed by tears, to see a line before him.

As soon as all was quiet he arose, threw aside his book, took a long glance around him, and then left the house, muttering audibly:

"Good-by! good-by!"

One lingering look at the old homestead, from which he was running away to take his destiny in his own hands, and he sped toward the forest where were hidden all of his earthly treasures.

CHAPTER III.

MEETING HIS MATCH.

THE man who had heard the remarks of George Powell, when he halted at the rock, on his way home, waited most impatiently for the time to go by.

After a couple of hours, which seemed an age to him, the boy returned, bearing the baggage that he was to carry with him.

These he concealed near the rock, though as he knew few persons ever passed that way, he hardly thought it necessary to hide them.

Again the man impatiently waited the return of the boy, and then he came with his pony, a clean-limbed roan mare, that showed spirit, bottom and speed.

The pony was lariatod out to feed upon the grass, unsaddled and unbridled, and once more the boy disappeared.

"Now is my time, for delay may spoil all, and I may have to kill the boy to get the things," said the man, and he arose and went over to where the boy's traps were concealed, and began an inspection of them.

"There are a good pair of revolvers, and the knife is the best steel," he muttered, and continuing to overhaul the things, he said slowly:

"The weapons are loaded, and here is more ammunition.

"Yes, the boy means business, and he has it in his face to keep his word and make a name for himself.

"I hate to disappoint him, but self-preservation is the first law of mankind.

"I have here just what I wish, a fine horse, and all to aid me; but where is the money?"

He searched all through the traps, but could nowhere find the money.

"That he has kept with him, and without money I cannot go, so I will wait and rob him when he comes," and the man again concealed himself in the thicket.

Just after sunset the full moon arose, and the man took up his position near a tree, to await the coming of the youth and spring upon him.

As the minutes went by he seemed to grow more and more nervous, wondering if any accident had prevented the boy from coming, or if he had repented of his determination to

go to Texas, his heart failing him, and would remain at home, intending to come after the pony and things in the morning.

"Perhaps he's afraid to come into this dark forest at night, and really I don't blame him much, for every shadow is a phantom to me," he said, shuddering as he spoke.

But George Powell was not made of the kind of stuff to back out, when once he had made up his mind, and as for being afraid of the forests, his youthful days had been passed in their shadow.

His mother was often wont to roam about the country with her boys, on horseback, and in an ambulance, and wandering like gipsies, many an adventure they had met with, that called forth the pluck and nerve of her sons.

His mother greatly liked Mr. Keating as a teacher, and she had always set her face sternly against his going off to seek his fortune: but now that he had trouble with the schoolmaster, he would act for himself, and he hoped to redeem himself in the eyes of his mother before very long, while by going away he simply carried out a pet scheme he had long thought of.

Leaving his home, with a choking sensation in the throat, patting the faithful watch-dog that wished to follow him, and driving him back, George Powell entered the forest by the path which he and his brother had made in going to and from school.

As he approached the spot where he had left his pony he was greeted with a neigh, and stepping up to the tree, where he had hung his saddle and bridle, he suddenly found himself in a grip of iron.

At first he believed it was Billy, who had discovered his purpose and had gone there to frighten him.

But he knew Billy had no such strength, and it flashed through his mind that it might be the schoolmaster.

But a ray of moonlight through the foliage showed him a dark-bearded, haggard face, and eyes that glared upon him.

"Boy! give me your money!

"The sixty-seven dollars you have, give to me, for I am a desperate man."

The words were hissed in the ears of the youth, who at once knew what he had to deal with.

He had been seized by the throat, but not with force enough to harm him, and by an effort of his strength, which was marvelous for one of his age, for the boys had said he could easily handle old Keating if he had wished to, he shook off the grasp, and at once began to act upon the offensive, while he cried:

"I've got the money, just that sum, right here in my pocket, and you've got to fight for it."

"By heaven! but you are game," said the man, and at once a fierce fight began.

Under ordinary circumstances the man could have quickly conquered the boy, for he possessed a large and powerful frame; but he had been wandering in the woods for several days without food, and was weak and unnerved in comparison to his usual strength.

George Powell was, as I have said, remarkably strong for his age, wiry, and quick as a flash in his movements, and though taken by surprise, he held his nerve wonderfully, and wrestled, tugged, struck and bit with his large foe with the savageness of a young panther.

Rendered desperate by the resistance of the boy, and with the thought of possible failure staring him in the face, the man made a determined effort, and threw his youthful antagonist heavily to the ground, falling upon him.

For an instant George was stunned; but recovering himself quickly, and finding the man had relinquished his grip upon him, to reach his pockets, he suddenly thrust his hand into his jacket and drew out the small revolver he had placed there.

The man saw the act and at once grasped for the weapon; but he was too late, for the boy's finger touched the trigger, the flash and report followed, and the struggle had ended.

"Boy, you have killed me," gasped the man.

George extricated himself from beneath him, and said, as he rested on his knees looking at him:

"I am sorry, sir, but you are to blame."

The man was silent a moment, breathing heavily, and then he said:

"What is your name, my lad?"

"George Powell."

"Well, George Powell, you have saved me from dying on the gallows, and I thank you.

"Have you ever heard of Ben Bradenburgh?"

"The man who killed his wife some weeks ago in the country town, and when in prison escaped by murdering the jailer?"

"Yes."

"Are you that man?"

"I am."

"Then I won't feel so sorry, for they say you were a cold-blooded wretch, and killed your wife to get her money," frankly and bluntly said the boy.

"Well, they tell the truth, for I have been all that was bad, and now that I am dying, I tell you to let my life be an example for you, for gambling and dissipation brought me to this."

"Perhaps you are not dying, and the doctor may save you."

"No, do not go for a physician.

"I know I am dying, and now I am glad the end has come.

"I heard what you said this afternoon, and I determined to take your horse and money and escape, for I have been hiding in the forests like a hunted deer, with the gallows staring me in the face for my crimes.

"Your bullet hit me just here, over the breast, and I know I have but a little time to live.

"But stay with me until I die, and then go to town and tell the constable where he will find the body of Ben Bradenburgh and get your reward, for, boy, there is a good sum offered for me dead or alive."

"I don't want your blood-money," said George indignantly, and he then tried to make the man as comfortable as he could, brought him a cupful of water from a rivulet near by, and remained by his side.

For a while he spoke with reason, and then his words became incoherent, and at last the end came, and Ben Bradenburgh the double murderer had cheated the gallows.

As soon as he was convinced that he was dead, George Powell gathered his traps together, bridled and saddled his pony, and rode rapidly away from the spot.

The country town was ten miles away, and he kept his pony at a lively gait until he drew up before the mansion of the Judge.

Then he dismounted and wrote by the moonlight, and with a pencil:

"JUDGE WINTHROPE:

"To-night, on the path leading from Widow Powell's to the Keating school-house, I was attacked by a man whose intention was to rob me.

"He said before he died, for I shot him in the struggle we had, that he was Ben Bradenburgh, the escaped murderer, and his body will be found on Halfway Rock, which Billy Powell will show you.

"As I had already left home for other parts, my killing Ben Bradenburgh has nothing to do with my absence now, and the reward offered for him you can give to the widow of the poor jailer he killed.

"Respectfully,

"GEORGE POWELL."

This letter was not written in a copper-plate hand, nor was the spelling remarkable for correctness; but it served the purpose, and George rung at the door of the Judge, and asked that the paper should be handed to that august personage.

"The Judge has retired," said the servant, who was just closing up the house for the night.

"Wake him up then, for it is important," and so saying George Powell turned on his heel, mounted his pony, and left the village as rapidly as he entered it, taking a road which his knowledge of geography told him was the most direct road from New York State to Texas.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG THIEVES.

A BOY of fifteen, a horse, a belt of arms, and sixty-seven dollars are, all told, a small force to move upon a State with, and to use in making a fortune, and so George Powell discovered ere he had been six weeks upon the road.

He was compelled to eat, and so was his pony, and this took money.

Then his pony began to fail him, and he had to trade him off, and give "boot."

This left him with but fifteen dollars, but a very fair animal, which the next day was recognized as a stolen animal, and George was pursued, arrested, and found himself in jail as a horse-thief.

In vain was it that he told of his exchanging his pony for that one; nobody would believe him, and, as a great many horses had been stolen in the neighborhood, he was set down as the young culprit.

Men looked at him through iron bars, and when told that he had a belt of arms on when taken, said in his hearing that he "looked dangerous," "had a bad eye," would make a "Dick Turpin," a "Claude Duval," if not sent to prison.

The boy was sadly tempted to write home to prove his character, but what would his mother and Bettie Low say?

Then all of Keating's school would laugh at him, so he determined to trust to himself alone and make his escape.

This was no easy matter, for he was on an upper floor of the jail, and his window looked down into the yard, where he observed a huge dog was kept running loose, as a terror to any prisoner meditating escape.

Had he been guilty of the offense with which he was charged, George Powell would have been willing to stand his trial, for he would have been reckless of consequences; but wholly innocent, and having refused to give his name, he was bent upon making his escape.

In the same cell with him was a pale-faced, haggard-looking young man of twenty, in whom he took an interest, for he did not look like a culprit.

He had said to George upon his entering:

"They say misery loves company, but I am really sorry to see you here, my young friend."

"Thank you," said George; "and I am sorry to have to be here; but I am innocent of wrong-doing, and shall have to make the best of it."

The two thus brought together soon became friends, and George told the young man something of himself, but kept back his name, and in time he learned that his prison pard had been a cashier in a large store, where he was loved and trusted.

But his father had committed forgery, to relieve himself of a difficulty, and unable to take up the forged paper, had confessed the fault to his son, begging him to aid him.

The son had control of some funds which the house never drew on, and he used of the amount enough to save his father; but the firm, the very next day, called for that money, and the young cashier was ruined, for he placed the blame upon himself to shield his father.

The result was his trial and sentence to prison for a term of years, and in two days more he was to be sent to the penitentiary.

With this young man George sympathized deeply, and not feeling that he was intentionally a thief, and disgusted with his father for his treatment of him, he said:

"I don't intend to remain here and be sent to prison when I am innocent, and I just advise you to go with me."

"But where are you going?"

"To Texas."

"But how?"

"That I'll decide on when I get out."

"But how are you going to get out?"

"I am thinking *how* now."

And George did think, and soon hit upon a plan.

In the jail-yard was one large tree, a chestnut, and it grew near the wall.

But the trunk of the tree was so surrounded by spikes and barbs that to climb it would be utterly impossible.

George noticed that one limb went over the wall a few feet, and that there were several branches which had been broken off by a gale of wind, and upon one of these his eyes rested.

"Do you see that limb which has been broken off?" he asked, pointing to one on the tree, some forty feet from his cell window.

"Yes."

"That is my aim."

"I don't see how."

"Well, I can throw a lasso."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and I can put a coil around that limb."

"But you have no lasso."

"No, but I can make one."

"How?"

"I'll show you."

The blankets and sheets were soon made into a long, strong rope, and with the gray left from their dinner it was thoroughly greased.

"But the grating in the window?" suggested the fellow-prisoner of George.

"See here!"

George took from his pocket a large knife which had a strong file-blade in it.

"Ah!" said the young man who had sacrificed himself to save his father, and his eyes brightened as George set to work upon the iron grating.

It was a long hard task, but one of the youths relieved the other, and at last one bar was in two.

Then they began on the second, and just as the jailer came with their supper, it too yielded to the file.

The jailer seemed to fancy the two young prisoners, and spoke a kindly word to them before he retired.

Both however were most anxious while he remained, and as soon as they were locked in for the night began their preparations for departure.

CHAPTER V.

A BOLD STROKE FOR LIBERTY.

HAVING collected what little they had to carry with them, George Powell and his fellow prisoner awaited until the moon arose, which was at ten o'clock.

Then all was still in the jail and the youth had little enough to see how to throw his lasso.

To do this he had to crawl through the grating, and hang by one hand to the iron bars, while with the other he whirled the lariat, which was by no means an easy task, as he was too close to the stone walls of the jail.

But at last he made a throw and it missed.

Again he tried, and with like result.

Hauling in the slack, while his comrade breathlessly awaited within the cell, he threw the lariat for the third time, and it caught fairly on the shattered limb.

Then he returned into the cell and drew on the line with all his might, and made it fast.

"You've got a cool head I hope," he said to his fellow prisoner, who was looking at the taut line between the jail windows and the tree, their only means of escape.

"I believe I can make it," he answered with some hesitancy.

"Do just as you see me do. Don't look down, and hold on for grim death," was the advice of George Powell.

Getting into the window he said quietly, as he stood on the sill, and grasped the rope:

"If it breaks, good-by.

"If it don't, we'll meet outside this hateful place."

After another test of the rope he swung himself upon it, and hand before hand began to make the perilous trip to the tree.

As he got away from the window the rope gave considerably, but on he went, swinging from his perilous height, and swaying to and fro in the moonlight.

Just as he reached the tree the huge dog discovered him, and instantly he called to his comrade to follow, for the brute set up a fierce barking.

Quickly the young cashier intrusted himself to the frail bridge, and came rapidly on, the

dog barking savagely beneath, until he brought to every window overlooking the jail-yard, a fellow unfortunate, who saw the bold attempt at escape and cheered the daring man who had ventured it.

"Steady! come slower, or you'll slip or break the rope," cried George Powell from the tree, where he was sheltered by the foliage.

He could see plainly the white, scared face of his comrade, and that he was clutching wildly at the rope before him, instead of quietly and with coolness, for he was wholly unnerved by the loud yelps of the dog, and the cries of the other prisoners.

But just as the tree was near at hand, out of the lower floor dashed the jailer, and he held in his hand a gun.

The yelping dog showed which way to look, and he threw his rifle to his shoulder:

"Don't shoot! he'll surrender," yelled George, from the tree, and the poor man echoed.

"Don't kill me, Townsend!"

But the flash and report came together, a shriek followed, and down upon the hard ground of the jail-yard, many feet below, fell the wretched man.

With the report of the gun George bounded like a squirrel through the branches of the tree, ran out upon the limb overhanging the wall, and with a spring was outside of his prison, while a loud yell of delight came from the prisoners in the cells, who saw his act, and who had just hooted the cruel deed of the jailer.

"After him, Savage!" yelled the keeper, and he hastily unlocked the iron gate and threw it open.

Away darted the savage brute hot on the heels of the boy fugitive, who had not a hundred feet the start of him, but who was flying like the wind toward a belt of trees which, he had seen from his cell window, fringed the river bank.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

HAD there been the slightest doubt in his mind of the death of his cell comrade, George Powell would have returned to have shared his fate; but he felt that he had been hit by the shot of the keeper, and had he not been, that the fall would kill him, he was assured.

So he at once looked to his own safety, escaping when he knew that the gun of the keeper was unloaded.

He heard the angry cry of the man to the dog, and the clanging of the iron gate, as it was thrown open, and he bounded forward like a deer.

Could he reach the river he believed he would be safe, for he was a splendid swimmer, and he held on for that purpose.

Hearing the yelp of the dog behind him, he renewed his exertions to reach the river, for he determined to drag the beast beneath the water, knowing he could not bite him there as readily as on shore.

A few more bounds and he sprang into the river, and almost on top of him came the savage brute.

But George was ready for him, and as the dog sunk from the force of his fall, he seized him, and diving deep, dragged him down with him.

There was a fierce struggle beneath the water, a tearing of human flesh with brute teeth and claws, and a piercing of the hairy hide with a keen knife, and then the battle ended, and the boy arose to the surface.

He was panting fearfully, and his head grew dizzy, and he seemed hardly able to keep above the surface.

But the cool air revived him, and the danger of his situation nerved him and he struck out boldly for the other shore, for he heard voices approaching from the direction of the jail.

The town lay upon one side of the river, but upon the other bank were a few scattering houses, and the inmates of these were soon aroused by the alarm sounded from the jail, and lights flashed here and there, and voices of men were heard calling to each other to find out what was the matter.

Knowing that it would be certain capture to go to either shore, George threw himself upon his back and floated down with the current.

This he continued to do until he was thoroughly rested from the efforts of his struggle, and then he swam with a swift, strong stroke, until the lights of the town were left far behind.

But suddenly his quick ear detected a sound behind him, and in the moonlight he discovered a boat coming swiftly along.

That it was in pursuit of him he was certain, so he dove deep and made his way to the shadows of the overhanging trees along the shore.

Presently the boat drew nearer, and the conversation of its occupants distinctly reached his ears.

"Who did you say the prisoner was, Townsend?" asked one.

"Why, it's that boy horse-thief," responded the one addressed, and whose voice George recognized as that of the under keeper of the jail.

"Oh, yes; and he's a good one to escape as you say."

"He is indeed; but I got the other one in time."

"You shot him dead, didn't you?"

"Yes; I aimed for his head, for I saw I had

him sure; but what has become of Savage, I wonder?"

"Your dog?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps the boy killed him."

"No; Savage could kill a dozen boys and not get a scratch."

"As I said at the landing, I believe the boy crossed the river and took to the woods, and the dog has got him treed there; but you all wanted to come down the river, so I yielded."

"Well, let us keep up a bright lookout," and with the last words the boat passed out of the youth's hearing, who muttered:

"You are mistaken, Mr. Townsend; I am not treed, and Savage did not get away with one boy this time, though I did get his teeth in my arm and felt his claws."

"I guess I'll take to floating again."

And down the river he floated for a mile or more, to again take shelter in the shadow as he saw the boat returning and pulling slowly up the stream.

He smiled as he heard the disappointed expressions of those in the boat at their lack of success in finding him; but when he again remembered the fate of his poor prison pard, the smile faded quickly from his face.

When the boat was out of sight he swam ashore, to rest himself by walking, and came upon a pasture in which were half a dozen good horses.

"Well, here is a temptation to borrow a horse," he said, and so strong was the temptation he even stopped and picked out the very animal he wanted.

"No; I was put in jail when not guilty, and if I am caught and have to go back I will not have them say they knew I was a horse-thief."

"I am very tired, and I would do much to escape, but I will not take that horse, though they stole mine from me, and three dollars is all I have in the world now."

He spoke in a sad tone, but walked on quite briskly, satisfied with himself for having resisted the temptation.

After a walk of a mile he again took to the river, and thus pressed on through the night, alternately walking and running.

At last the day broke, then the sun arose, and the poor tired boy lay down in a thicket to sleep, for he was utterly worn out, hungry, and suffering from the bite in his arm.

He slept for some hours, and at last awoke with a start, to find a man standing by and looking down upon him.

"Well, my lad, you seek out-of-the-way places for a nap," said the man.

"I am traveling, and sought rest in the most convenient place I could find," answered George.

"Well, as I found you, you are my proper-

ty, so come with me, and we'll decide what is best to be done with you.

"Come, no nonsense, for I'll stand none."

George had only his knife, was weak, hungry, and wretched, and arose without a word and walked on ahead of the man, who so unceremoniously claimed the ownership of him, for resistance he knew was utterly vain.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OUTLAW BAND.

It was a walk of a mile, which the captor of George Powell led him, to at last stop at the door of a small cabin on the river bank.

It looked like the home of some poor farmer, and was so supposed to be; but upon entering the house, George found there half a dozen rough-looking men, and one woman.

The cabin was scantily furnished, had four rooms on the ground floor: but the low ceiling indicated that there was space above, and in fact a ladder stood against the wall, and over it was a trap-door.

"Well, Buck, who has yer got thar?" asked one of the men, rising from a table, upon which a dinner was spread, consisting of bacon, cabbage, catfish, corn-bread and coffee.

"Oh, I found this babe asleep in the woods, and fetched him home with me," was the answer.

"Who is you, sonny?" asked another.

"I am a poor boy, without any friends, and am making my way to Texas as best I can," was the frank reply.

"I guess we'll have the same trail to strike afore long, as this country is getting pretty hot for us; but you look as though you'd had a hard time of it, young feller."

"I have," was the very truthful response.

"Been travelin' on foot and by water, I jedges," and the man looked at the wet, torn, and muddy clothing of the boy.

"Yes."

"Well, I guess you better tarry with us awhile, and mayhap you can make enough honest cash to help you along.

"We needs jist sich a youngster as you be."

"To do what?"

"Make a honest living."

"How?"

"Waal, you is 'quisitive."

"It is natural, if I get work, I should like to know what it is."

"That is so.

"Well, you can stay here and help Davy on the farm, for he and his wife needs help, as we boards with 'em."

Before George could reply a man entered, carrying a pair of oars on his shoulder.

"Hullo, cap'n, jist in time for grub.

"But what's the news up in the town?"

asked one of the men, and who seemed to be the host of the cabin.

"There's been some excitement there, for a young horse-thief and a fellow prisoner made a daring escape from the jail last night," was the answer, as the man stood the oars in the corner.

"Bully!" cried several voices, while one asked:

"Got away, did they, cap'n?"

"The boy did, but the young man, who was to be sent to State's prison, missed fire and got shot, as he was going across a rope they say the boy had thrown over from his window and caught on the large chestnut in the jail-yard—but who have you there?"

"Oh, he's a young rooster I picked up asleep in the woods awhile since," said the captor of George.

The man addressed as captain walked over to where George stood and eyed him closely, while he said:

"I left town at sun-up, and they had a reward out for a boy about your age, with just such hair and eyes described, hatless, wearing boots, and jeans clothing.

"He escaped by the river, and you look wet, muddy, and answer his description exactly."

"I think I ought to," said George.

"Why?"

"Because I am the boy."

"Well, young fellow, I can take you back and get just five hundred dollars reward for you."

"But you won't do it," boldly said George.

"Well, now, why won't I?"

"Because I'm not blind."

"You don't look blind."

"Oh, no; I can see through a millstone, if there's a hole in it," said George, with a wink and assuming an independent swaggering air.

"I wish you'd explain yourself youngster."

"I mean you wouldn't betray a pard."

"I don't know you, boy."

"But I know you."

"Well, who am I?"

"You just take me up to the town to get your reward, and I'll simply make known that the one that claims the money has a price on his head."

"Hal! what do you mean?"

"I mean that while I have been in jail I have often heard them talking of an outlaw band of seven men, whom they call Captain Lighthand and his crew, and whose rendezvous is said to be down the river, but no one knows where.

"You are just seven, these chaps call you captain, you dwell down the river from the town, and I am in the outlaw nest, and I'd jist tell who was my captor.

"Do you see?"

As George spoke he winked slyly, and it was evident that the entire party "did see," for after a look and a word or two between themselves, the captain said:

"Well, I'll not give you up, if you'll join us."

"If I don't?"

"Then you'll be floating down the river a dead boy within half an hour."

"I guess I'll join, then."

"You are wise, for you shall not regret it, as we give you a good start in life, and you are just about the boy we want, for they do say in the town that you are a nimble little horse-thief."

George winced at this, but answered:

"Well, they ought to know, for I was caught with a stolen horse; but, as I'm a member of the band now, I'd like something to eat, for I worked hard last night."

The men laughed at the off-hand manner of the boy, and the woman at once set him a place at the table.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JAYHAWKERS AT WORK.

WHEN George Powell apparently became one of the outlaw band, he played a deep game, which he hoped would in the end win him freedom.

He had heard much of Captain Lighthand and his band of burglars, horse thieves and sharpers, and that they had operated successfully through that part of the country for months.

The night before his arrest he had stopped at a farm-house, where Lighthand and his men were the theme of conversation, and when he had been found with a stolen horse, he was at first set down as of their number, and some even hinted of setting an example by lynching him.

In prison he had heard both officials and prisoners talking of the secret band, and how fruitless had been every effort to capture them or to even discover their exact whereabouts.

Accident had placed him in their power, and he held the secret, for he was convinced that those at the cabin were Lighthand and his men; but he well knew that if he was suspected, he would at once be killed.

His having been arrested as a horse-thief, and then making his escape in the bold manner in which he did, helped him with the outlaws immensely, and they congratulated themselves upon having added to their number a youth of daring, and one upon whose head was set a price.

"If he don't act right, boys, we can sell him for the reward, and send him in by one he don't know is a secret agent, and then we can go to our other retreat," said the captain that night, when George had gone up to the garret

to bed, and little he thought the boy had his ear to a crack in the floor and heard every word.

"Oh, he'll act right, never fear, for he's as deep in as any of us, and is only too glad to join the band," said another, and this seemed to be the general opinion of the vile crew.

For some days George remained at the cabin, and Captain Lighthand who went often to town in disguise, brought the papers with an account of the daring escape of the boy and the death of the young cashier.

In the papers he was spoken of as the "Darling Unknown," and George was delighted to discover that in no way had they learned his name.

"What is your name anyway, sonny?" asked one of the gang.

"Dick Turpin, Junior," answered George without the slightest hesitation.

"Well, you're a good one," was the rejoinder, as the others laughed.

After some days with the band George realized that something of an important character was on hand, for he saw the men talking apart, and several times knew that they referred to him.

When they had apparently decided upon some course the captain said:

"Say, Dick, how'd you like to get work out?"

"What kind of work, captain?"

"Well, there is a very rich man lives down the river some twenty miles, and we want you to work the place, for he keeps plenty of gold in the house, and his sideboard just groans with the silver on it."

"You mean to rob him?"

"Yes."

"Well, why don't you do it?"

"We are going to, but we want you to go there, get all the points down fine, and then let us into your discoveries, and we'll pull the place."

"How am I to go there?" asked George.

"Oh, we'll drop you down at night in a boat, and you can go there and ask to get work."

"The judge employs a good many people, for he has a large stock-farm, and you can get a berth some way, and soon put us."

"He's a judge, you say?"

"Yes."

"Well, suppose you rig me up as a girl, for I'll make a lively-looking one, and if I went as I am I might be recognized by the description the papers have given of me."

"That's the very thing, for you will make a durned pretty gal, and the old lady here can rig you out in duds, as we have brought her trunks full."

"Here, old lady, see if you can turn this handsome boy into a pretty young girl."

"I can do it, for he's got a small waist, little hands and feet, and will dress up fine."

George submitted willingly to the metamorphosis, and that night he got into a boat with one of the band, and was rowed rapidly down the river to a village a mile from the mansion of the judge the outlaws intended to rob.

CHAPTER IX.

GEORGE POWELL'S PLOT.

JUDGE GERVAIS was one of the richest men in Tennessee, the State in which George Powell found his road to Texas so suddenly full of difficulties and dangers, and his home was a grand one, on the banks of the East Tennessee river.

Stopping at the tavern, George gave his name as "Miss Powell, of New York," and was assigned a pleasant room, in which he slept soundly until that relic of barbarism, the gong, summoned him to breakfast.

Expressing a desire to have a vehicle ordered for him, it was soon at the door, and the negro driver was told to go to the home of Judge Gervais.

The judge was at home, and would of course see Miss Powell, said the polite negro butler; and George was ushered into an elegantly-furnished library.

Judge Gervais was not long in coming, and George found himself in the presence of a dignified, handsome man, with a stern yet kindly face.

"Miss Powell, I am informed," he said, with courtly grace.

"Yes, sir; that is the name I gave your butler; but if I am permitted to see you where you are assured there are none others to hear, I will tell you just who I am," said George, boldly.

The judge arched his eyebrows, but said:

"We are wholly alone here, Miss Powell;" and the judge gazed more attentively into the face and at the well-dressed form of what he supposed was a handsome girl of eighteen.

"Then, sir, I may as well tell you at once I am in disguise, and that I am here to serve you; but I must beg you promise in no way to betray me."

The judge was now wholly surprised, for how could the young girl be disguised, and how could she serve him, he wondered.

"Any communication you have to make me shall be in confidence, I assure you, miss."

"Then, sir, I am a boy, not a girl, as my appearance leads you to suppose."

"A boy?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Then what in the name of Heaven are you rigged out in petticoats for?" and Judge Gervais spoke sternly.

"To serve you, sir."

"How you can do that is more than I can find out."

"I will tell you, sir."

"Have you ever heard of Captain Lighthand?"

"What? that arch robber?"

"Yes, sir."

"Indeed I have, and would give much to sentence him to the gallows."

"You may have that pleasure, sir, without paying the thousand dollars, for I am now laying a plot to get him into your power."

"The deuce you are?"

"Yes, sir."

"Pray explain, miss, sir, or whatever, or whoever you may be," said the puzzled judge.

"I am a New York boy, Judge Gervais, and am an honest one, and I was going to Texas to seek my fortune, when, my horse breaking down, I traded him off for another, giving nearly every dollar I had to boot.

"It seems the animal I thus got had been stolen, and riding into K——, he was recognized, and I was arrested and put into jail as a horse-thief.

"Had I been guilty, I would have remained and taken the consequences, but being innocent, I was determined to make my escape, and I did so, though a fellow prisoner, a young man who told me his sad story, was less fortunate, and was killed by the keeper."

"Aha! I read all about this.

"And so you are that daring young fellow?"

"I am the one, sir, who made my escape as I told you."

"Well, you look the one to do it; but go on with your story, please," said the judge, deeply interested.

"I walked along the river bank, floated and swam with the current until sunrise, and then laid down to sleep, when I was found by a rough-looking man who took me to a cabin near by.

"It was the retreat of Lighthand and his men, and the captain having just returned from town recognized in me the fugitive prisoner, and I confessed, and became a member of the band."

"Ha! you did this?"

"Of course, sir, for I was among thieves, and knew my life would be worthless if they suspected I was not really a villain like themselves."

"That is good reasoning; but continue your story, for you interest me."

"The captain formed a plot, sir, to rob your house—"

"The mischief he did!"

"Yes, sir, and I was selected to come here, seek employment, and learn the lay of the land and the possibilities of entering the house.

"I was very willing to come, for I saw a chance to capture the band, and I selected

this disguise as one that would give me entrance to the house, for I told the men I would pretend to have some property north, I wished to ask you about, and here I am, sir."

"Well, you wish to lead me, with others, to the rendezvous then?"

"No, sir, I wish to meet the man who came with me, tell him what night to come, and say that you have invited me to stay here a few days, and that I will let them into the mansion, when you can easily entrap them."

"The very thing, my boy, and when Lighthand and his vile crew are in my power, you have but to ask any favor of me to have it granted."

"For the present you had better stick to your petticoats, so return and meet your comrade, and appoint the third night from this."

"Tell him to come with the others at midnight, to the eastern door, and you will admit them."

After a little longer conversation with the judge, George Powell took his leave and returned to the village, where one of the band, the one who had come down the river with him, was waiting.

Unperceived by others, George told him of his visit, and that the judge, swallowing his story, and thinking he was going to make a large fee out of an heiress, had invited him to remain at the mansion.

"I tell you, Buck, the captain was right about the silver on the sideboard, and I guess the judge keeps plenty of money in the house, for there was a safe in the library that looked fat," said George, as the outlaw turned to depart.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRAP.

TOWARD midnight of the night appointed by George Powell to entrap the burglars, a group of men stood in the garden near the Gervais mansion, gazing out from an *arbor vitæ* summer-house.

They were the band of Captain Lighthand, and they spoke together in low whispers.

In the mansion all was dark, and as the hour of midnight tolled from the clock in the plantation bell-house, Captain Lighthand said:

"No signal yet."

"You don't think the boy would play us false, does yer?" asked one.

"No; for his neck is in the noose with ours, and besides I don't think he is that kind, for he's one to like just such fun as this."

"If he did, there hain't one of us but would hang," said another.

"Yes, ten times over, if they brought all of our deeds against us; but see! was not the flash of a light in an upper room?"

"Yes, captain, and there is the lamp in the window, as the boy agreed," said Buck.

"But there's a woman in the room," cried one.

"No, it is the boy in his petticoats."

"Now, lads, we will reap a fortune this night, and will have to lie low for two weeks after our work."

"Mind you, no killing unless crowded, and then let no witness live to appear against you."

The captain spoke sternly, and the men growled an assent to his words.

Soon a dark form was seen approaching, and some one whispered:

"It is the boy."

Holding his skirts around him as gracefully as though he had been brought up in them, George Powell approached the arbor, hesitated, and gave a low whistle.

"Here we are, lad, all ready, for we landed from the boat an hour ago to be on time."

"I'm glad to see you," and Captain Lighthand stepped forward and warmly grasped the hand of the disguised boy.

"And I am glad to see you, captain, for I'm tired playing girl."

"Are you all here?"

"Every one of us but the old woman at the cabin."

"Good, for it will need all your force."

"What for?" asked several voices in chorus.

"To carry all the plunder," coolly answered George.

"Are the ropes all laid?"

"Yes, all is arranged to the best of my ability, but you must be quiet so as not to alarm any of the household, and I must have time, after I let you in, to get back to my room."

"Sure! now lead on," and the delighted burglar captain moved forward in his impatience adding:

"We'll have a hard pull of it to reach the cabin by daybreak, as it is."

George Powell quietly glided back toward the mansion, purposely dodging from tree to tree, and as silent as specters the band of outlaws followed him.

At last he approached the small piazza on the east end and ascended the steps.

When all stood in a group before the door, he gently opened it and they entered.

"I'll lock this, as you will have to go to the dining-room and can leave by that way," he whispered.

The key he turned in the lock and placed it in his pocket, and then, grasping the captain's hand, while the others as he did so also caught hold of each other, he led them along the hall for a few feet.

"Wait here!"

He whispered the words and silently moved away.

Then was heard a loud clap of the hands, and instantly a flood of light streamed into

the hall, and three doors being thrown back, the astounded outlaws beheld in each one of them half a dozen negroes with guns leveled at them, while upon the stairway stood Judge Gervais, his overseer and George Powell, each with revolvers covering the hearts of the burglars.

"Surrender, or you are dead men!"

In stern, ringing tones Judge Gervais shouted the words, and the outlaws swayed back into a corner and threw up their hands in token of obedience.

But Captain Lighthand shouted:

"We are entrapped, and we surrender; but I swear that traitor shall die."

He threw his revolver forward as he spoke, and fired full at George Powell, who saw his act, and drew trigger at the same instant, so that the weapons rung out together.

And each bullet sped true, for George Powell dropped in a heap and rolled down the stairs to the hallway, while Captain Lighthand fell dead in his tracks.

"Great God! he has killed the boy!"

"Seize those devils, Runyon, while I look after the lad, and you, Abram, ride with all haste after Doctor Wortley," cried Judge Gervais, springing down the stairs and kneeling by the side of poor George, who lay limp and apparently lifeless upon the floor, which was stained with his blood.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

WELL, my brave boy, the doctor tells me you are all right again, that the crisis has wholly passed, and you will be as good as new," and Judge Gervais entered a pleasant room in his own mansion one morning, some weeks after the affair with Lighthand and his band.

"I owe my life, sir, to the kind nursing I have received at the hands of yourself and family," was the reply of the occupant of the room, and who was none other than George Powell.

He had been at the point of death from the wound given him by Lighthand, but had rallied at last and was rapidly recovering.

The judge had been called away for some days, but returning found his young guest on the road to rapid recovery.

"Nonsense, you saved me, my boy, more than I can ever repay, for I know now who this Lighthand was, and that he had not only intended robbing me, but killing me, for I sentenced him to death some years ago for a base murder.

"But you killed him, and his band confessed the whole plot of how I was to be killed.

"But the jury made short work of them, for all other law business was set aside to try them, and they were sentenced to be hanged, and yesterday I went to their execution.

"They tried hard to bring you into the matter, but I vouched for you, kept your name, as you asked me, in the background, but am sorry to say that the authorities at K— hate to acknowledge themselves wrong, and they intend to push the affair against you.

"But don't feel worried, for when they send here to arrest you—"

"But for what, sir?"

"They say that you had a stolen horse in your possession, and that you were acknowledged a member of the band, and they will not listen to reason, so let them go ahead."

"But I would not be tried on such a charge for the world, after leaving home as I did, Judge Gervais."

"I know that, my boy, so I have determined to prevent it."

"But I do not wish you to compromise yourself, sir, on my account."

"Nor shall I, for I have a little plot arranged that will just give those people of K— the go-by.

"It may not be the thing for an ex-judge to be thwarting the law in its course, but then the law is wrong in this case and I shall do it."

"No, no, sir; I will remain and try and prove my innocence.

"If I could only find the man I traded with, then all would be right."

"No; my plot is this.

"I have a nephew about your age, who yesterday got a severe fall from a horse, which broke his leg, and will lay him up for months.

"He has just come on to see me, and no one knows him here, and besides he looks like you.

"In three days my bail bond for you ends, and then there is to be sent here an officer to remain near you, so that you cannot escape.

"I will be absent, and when he asks to be shown to the room of the wounded youth, my butler will show him up to Harvey's, and there he can sit until he finds out his mistake."

"But will this not implicate your nephew, sir?"

"No; for his doctor orders him to keep perfectly quiet, and he will not speak to the officer."

"But then he will find out his mistake and arrest me."

"No, for how can he, when you will be half-way to Texas."

"To Texas, sir?"

"Yes, is it not there where you were going?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I have to go down into Louisiana, and I will drive that far with you, for I shall go in my carriage.

"Then, when I leave you, you will be able to go on alone on horseback, for I shall fit you

out most thoroughly, and give you a letter to a ranchero in Texas who will put you in the way to make a start in life."

George Powell was deeply touched at the kindness of the judge, and said softly:

"I do not deserve all this kindness from you, Judge Gervais."

"You deserve far more, and let me tell you that I sent a detective from Buffalo to your old home, and he writes me that you have told only the truth—"

"Oh, Judge Gervais!"

"Don't be alarmed, George, for he did not betray you in any way, but only ferreted out all I cared to know."

"Now, my advice would be that you would defy the people of K—, stand your trial, and come off in triumph, and I would back you in it."

"But, as you do not wish one word to reach home regarding you, I have done as you deemed best, and will continue to do so."

"Now brace up, and you shall start the first night that the officer comes to the house, while I will go on ahead of you."

Thus it was arranged, and one week after George Powell was on his way to Texas, the Mecca of his hopes, having, in Judge Gervais, found a friend in need.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE'S FIRST SIGHT OF RED-SKINS ON THE WAR-PATH.

TOWARD sunset of a pleasant afternoon, some six weeks after the departure of George Powell from the hospitable home of Judge Gervais in Tennessee, the reader might have seen that youthful hero riding leisurely over a Texas prairie, and following a wagon trail leading toward the westward.

Here and there off on the horizon a timber island was visible, and these alone broke the vast expanse of flower-bespangled grass which seemed like the vast rolling waves of the ocean, as the land rose into rolls, and the evening breeze waved the grass until the whole appeared like some moving mass.

The ruddy glow of health had come back to the face of George Powell, and the southern sun had browned him to almost the hue of a Gipsy.

He was mounted upon a long-bodied, gaunt black mare, that stepped lightly over the prairie, as though reluctant to put her iron-shod hoof down upon the flowers, and one look at the animal was sufficient to show her great powers of endurance and that she could go at a terrific speed if necessary.

Her accoutrements were of the best kind, a rifle slung at one side of the saddle-horn, and a Texas lariat at the other, while George had

discarded the jeans suit for the garb of a prairie man.

He seemed provided with all that was necessary for his wants, and though without a guide, and wholly alone, was venturing boldly westward as though fully conscious of his own powers to take care of himself and find his way where he chose.

Several weeks before at Shreveport George Powell had parted with Judge Gervais, who had insisted upon providing the boy with a good outfit; and forcing upon him a hundred dollars, while he gave him a letter to a large cattle-man in Texas, asking him to set him in the right way to start in life in the State his romantic love of adventure had caused him to seek.

It was to this friend of Judge Gervais that George was going, and he had hoped to come in sight of the ranch that night, but failing to do so, was aiming toward a clump of timber where he intended to camp until the following morning.

Presently the boy drew rein, for he saw far off on his right a horse dash over a roll of the prairie.

A look was sufficient to show him that the animal was flying at his topmost speed, and was urged on at every bound by his rider.

That rider he saw also was a female, for he caught sight of the fluttering skirts and a mass of golden hair which had been shaken down from its fastenings and was flying out far behind in the air as the horse ran.

What was the cause of the animal's flight?

Who was the female thus alone on the prairie?

These questions George asked himself, but could not answer.

But he spurred forward at a gallop, to head her off, as he did not know but that wolves might be her pursuers, and were hidden from his sight by the long prairie grass.

At that moment she descried him, drew rein, half turned away, and then came toward him.

As she drew nearer she waved her hand and shouted:

"Turn and fly, for I am pursued by Indians."

George Powell had dreamed of Indians for years, and he had actually prayed to see the day he might be brought face to face with these red children of the forest.

He had seen some rough specimens of tame Indians, as he had come along, and been told to beware of wild ones which he might possibly meet on the trail.

Now he was actually told there were Indians near, and evidently upon the war-path, and a female was flying from them for her life. Must he also fly?

Not he, for he would not fly at his first meeting with his longed for foes.

Quickly he looked to his revolvers in his belt, loosened his knife in its scabbard, just to get all in readiness, for he hardly hoped to use that weapon, unslung his rifle, and then glanced at the coming horsewoman.

He saw then that she was a young girl, very beautiful, her face flushed with excitement, and that she rode like one born in the saddle.

Her horse was a fine one, but was fagged out, that was evident.

"Turn and fly with me, or you are lost," cried the young girl to George, and she turned in her saddle and glanced behind her.

George looked also in the direction in which she gazed, and he at once took her advice and spurring alongside, fled with her.

And no wonder, for his first glance at the wild red-skins revealed to his startled gaze fully a hundred warriors, urging their mustangs forward in chase of the young girl at their utmost speed.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BOY'S PLUCK.

HAD two, or even three Indians put in an appearance, over the rise in the prairie, George Powell would have instantly given them battle, and been delighted at the chance of rescuing the fair maiden who sought his protection.

But when scores of them appeared, in all the glory of war-paint and feathers, yelling like demons, and evidently bent on life-taking and scalps, George changed his mind with an alacrity that did him credit.

As he wheeled his horse to fly, he glanced into the face of the maiden, and sought to cheer her with:

"Don't be alarmed, miss."

"But I am frightened almost to death, for that is Blue Eye's band," she cried, accompanying almost each word with a blow of her whip upon the haunches of the straining horse.

George had heard of Blue Eye as being a young chief of great skill as a leader, but a very bad Indian, and felt that the young girl had cause indeed to dread him.

A glance at her as she rode by his side revealed a most graceful form, clad in a dark-green riding-habit, and a wealth of golden hair, which had wholly freed itself of comb and hair-pins, and also was hatless.

Her face was very beautiful, and she looked to be about eighteen years of age.

Her horse was a fine one, but was yielding rapidly to the hard race he had run, and George saw that he could not stand it much further, so asked:

"Is there no ranch, or place of refuge near?"

"My father's ranch is ten miles away.

"I rode out with him this afternoon, and

the Indians sprung from the grass almost upon us.

"Father bade me fly and rouse the rancheros, and I did so, while he, after making a good fight, was captured.

"Don't think me a coward for leaving my father, but I felt they would not kill him, at least now, and I knew the ranches were all in danger, for this raid of Blue Eye is wholly unsuspected.

"But see, how fast my horse is failing me."

It was evident that the animal had run his race, for he staggered badly, and was straining himself beyond endurance, and the Indians were gradually gaining.

"Oh that it were dark," she cried, as her horse stumbled badly.

"It will be dark in a very short while, miss, for the sun has set," said George, and then, as her horse again stumbled, and could hardly recover himself, he continued:

"Here, you must ride with me, for Black Bess can carry us both easily."

He rode nearer as he spoke, leant over, and grasping her around the waist, raised her from her saddle, and placed her behind him with a strength that amazed her.

Almost instantly her horse stopped, dead beat, but Black Bess bounded on, her speed but very little decreased by the double weight.

"Poor whalebone," sighed the young girl, as she saw her horse left behind, and then, having watched the Indians for awhile, she continued:

"Fast as your horse is going, the Indians are gaining, for Blue Eye always has picked men and ponies."

"Yes, Black Bess has had a hard ride of it the past few days, and feels her double load.

"If she was rested, no horse I ever met could run with her."

"She is a splendid animal, and if she saves us my father, Major Hume, will give you your price for her."

"I will not sell her, miss; but is your father Major Hume, the ranchero?"

"Yes; do you know him?"

"No, miss; but I have a letter to him from Judge Gervais, of Tennessee."

"Indeed! Poor papa will be glad to see you if he ever gets away from Blue Eye; but see how fast they are gaining."

George looked back and saw that the red-skins were gaining, for Black Bess was carrying double weight, added to which he had a quantity of ammunition in his saddle-bags and many other things which went to weigh her down in a struggle like the one she was then making, and which she was hardly fitted for, after her long days of travel.

It was now almost dark, and suddenly his face brightened, for he had decided upon what course he would pursue.

Before him was a divide in the prairie, and it ran along for a considerable distance he could see.

"How far is your home from here, miss?" he asked.

"Fully eight miles."

"Then Black Bess could not stand it with both of us, for we'd be caught."

"But what can be done?" the girl asked, appealingly.

"I'll drop off when we come to the divide yonder, for they won't see me."

"And do you expect me to ride on to safety upon your horse, leaving you to be killed?" indignantly asked Helen Hume.

"If you do not, both of us will go under, and I can look after myself when alone."

"No; let me drop off, and you can return to the divide for me when you get help."

"No, miss; I'll stay and you go on."

"It is too dark for them to see me, so I'll leave you now."

With the skill on horseback for which he had been noted since his earliest boyhood, George Powell slipped from the saddle upon the neck of his mare, clung there an instant, with his feet hanging down, and just as Black Bess came to the head of a ravine, he dropped into it.

On sped the mare, bearing on her back the lovely girl, and as she drew herself forward into the saddle George Powell heard her cry:

"Good-by, and God bless you for your noble sacrifice."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN DEADLY DANGER.

GEORGE certainly performed the act of dropping from the neck of Black Bess into the ravine most skillfully, and yet there was a keen eye in the coming band that either saw it, or thought he did, which was just as bad, and as they came dashing up, he ordered:

"Let Bad Elk take his warriors and stop at divide to look for pale-face."

The Bad Elk at once gave his signal to his immediate band of braves, some twenty in number, and they halted at the ravine, while Blue Eye and the remainder dashed on in pursuit of Helen Hume, the chief the more convinced that he was right by the fact that Black Bess began to gain on him from the instant he thought he had detected one of the riders dropping off, and his eagle eyes showed him that the fluttering skirt still remained upon the animal, and the maiden was his game.

The spot at which George Powell had left the maiden to go on alone was the very head of a ravine, which became larger and larger as it went toward a distant stream of water.

Although it was deep enough at its head to wholly conceal the youth, unless the Indians stopped to search for him, he concluded that

he had better run away from the spot as fast as he could, and was about to dart down the ravine, when a sudden thought came to him to perform a like strategy.

It was one of those sudden thoughts for which he became noted in after years, to get out of a scrape where escape seemed wholly impossible, and that seemed born in him to make him a natural Indian fighter.

As soon as it came to him that if the Indians did see him, or if they stopped to search the ravine, he would be discovered, he at once threw himself down in the grass, and with his rifle slung upon his back, crawled with all speed away from the ravine, out upon the prairie.

He had little time to do this, for the Indians were but a few hundred yards away, and were spread out considerably, so that he had quite a distance to crawl.

But he did not give up, and when he saw that if he continued to move any longer, some quick eye would perceive him, he laid down flat and drew the grass around him.

One warrior was riding beyond where he lay, he noted, and one was coming directly toward him, but he knew he had to take the chances.

He heard the dull thud of the rapidly coming troop, the *swish, swish*, as they cut through the grass, and then came a heavy blow in his side, a dark object above him, and the Indian and his horse had *passed directly over him*.

The hoof of one of the fore legs had given him a hard stroke in the side, almost knocking the breath out of him, but this George did not mind, as he felt he was safe.

Watching the dashing band, he saw that they were pressing on after the maiden, and glancing toward the ravine he beheld the party of Bad Elk, and knew that he was the object of their attention.

He had been in danger before, but never had he been alone on the prairie at night, dismounted, and with a band of Indians upon his trail, and momentarily the boy's heart sunk within him at the deadly danger that faced him.

But he was possessed of a remarkable courage, and self-reliance was one of the traits of his family, and very soon he became calm, and set to work thinking about the best thing to be done to extricate himself from his peril.

He turned his gaze upon the Indians near by and saw that some had dismounted, to go down the ravine on foot, and the others had divided, and were to search the prairie on each side for a hundred yards, keeping even with those who followed down the gully.

"I guess I'll remove from this scene as fast as I can, for I can plainly see that I am wanted," he muttered, and he continued to

crawl further out upon the prairie, until finding he could no longer see the red-skins, he arose and walked briskly away.

"My best chance is to strike for the Hume ranch, I guess, for if it is only eight miles, I can make it in two-hours," he said, and making a circuit, he came back to the plainly marked trail through the grass, where Blue Eye had passed, and this he followed at a swift walk.

He had gone on for the distance of several miles, when suddenly a light gleamed before him, far across the prairie.

"That must be the ranch," he said.

"And if so, I am safe, for I have heard no firing, and Blue Eye could not have attacked the place.

"I do hope that Miss Hume got there in safety.

"If she did, I guess my saving her will do me as much good with her father as will Judge Gervais's letter.

"But they have got the major, she told me—hal! the light has disappeared—no, there it is—yes, but it is gone again."

He halted and looked steadily before him for a while, and then said:

"Ah! I see, there are horsemen between me and the light, and their forms hide it every now and then.

"I wonder if it is Blue Eye's band?

"I would like to know whether they are going or coming."

He watched attentively for awhile, and then said, quickly:

"Now I am in trouble again, for they are coming this way."

He moved rapidly away until he believed he had gotten out of their path, and then lay down in the grass once more.

He distinctly heard the fall of hoofs, the low voices of men in conversation, and just as he hoped they would pass him, there came the sharp bark of a coyote near by.

Instantly it was answered by the long-drawn-out howl of the wolf, and almost upon him.

Quickly he sprang to his knees to get a better view and to his horror saw that the large force of Blue Eyes was coming directly toward him, having changed their course, and the smaller one, under Bad Elk, was within a hundred feet of him, coming in the opposite direction.

He was between two fires, and the Indians were scattered so that he knew his only chance was to remain where he was, hiding as well as he could in the deep grass, and that chance was a most desperate one indeed.

CHAPTER XV.

A DARING DEED THAT CAME TO GRIEF.

WITH a great deal of anxiety, as the reader may readily understand, George Powell watched the movements of the Indians.

He had hoped that they would turn upon meeting each other and go back upon the trail, and that thus he might escape, but to his utter consternation, they halted upon coming together, and the chief gave a loud order, which at once scattered the warriors.

This scattering George discovered to mean that they were to camp for awhile, for each warrior rode off to himself, and dismounting, lariatied out his pony to rest and feed.

In many cases the warriors spread their blankets by the lariat-pin and laid down to get a nap or to rest themselves, while a few, leaving their ponies to feed, went toward a common center, as though to hold a pow-wow.

This common center was but a short distance from where George lay, and it seemed a foregone conclusion to him that he would be discovered, killed and scalped.

"The red-skin that makes the discovery, though, won't be in at my scalping," he muttered, as he held his rifle ready for use.

Finding that affairs were settling down to quietude, George determined to play a bold game to escape.

He noticed that now and then an Indian was moving about on the prairie, and occasionally a horseman would ride in, as though returning from a scout, dismount, lasso out his pony, and go toward the group that were holding a council of war not far from where he regretted to think he was hiding.

"I'll draw my blanket over my head and boldly walk out, and if any warrior speaks to me, I'll grunt in my best style, for that is all the Indian I know," he muttered.

Having made up his mind to do this, he was about to put it in execution, when he saw a warrior riding toward him.

The red-skin came to a halt, dismounted, staked his pony—a snow-white animal—out to feed, and walked forward to join the group, where Blue Eye was evidently holding a consultation with his sub-chiefs.

The warrior was a chief—George saw by his feathers—and passed within five feet of the boy, who was now rolled in his blanket, "playing Injun," for he had carried that very necessary article with him when he dropped into the ravine.

The chief made some remark to George as he passed, which was unintelligible to the boy, as was the grunt in response to the red-skin.

Fortunately the chief did not tarry to talk with his supposed sleepy warrior, but passed on.

Instantly George determined to act, and, as he fastened his eyes upon the splendid white pony, said:

"I guess if the suspicious citizens of K— were here now, they'd accuse me justly of having designs upon horse-flesh, for I shall

steal that Indian's horse, as I prefer riding to walking any time."

George made his way to the lariat-pin of the white pony, and began to draw him slowly toward him.

The white pony came slowly, evidently preferring to feed, and showed some little alarm at discovering who it was that wanted him.

But George coaxed him and soon stood up by his side, and adjusted the Indian saddle and bridle.

Then he lay down in the grass again and began to crawl toward the outskirts of the camp, guiding himself by the different horses here and there, to avoid going too near their masters.

At last he deemed himself in a position where he could mount and boldly ride the rest of the way, for the suspense he was in was fearful.

Getting upon the back of the animal, who by no means liked his change of riders, he started for the open prairie by a way where the staked-out ponies seemed fewest.

He had ridden but a few steps when, as his ill luck and the Indian's good fortune would have it, the chief finished his business with Blue Eye and came in search of his horse.

He saw that he had strayed, and his keen eyes detected the white animal some distance away.

But, could he believe his eyes when he saw that the animal held a rider?

Had any warrior of the band dared mount the steed of Prairie Snake?

If so, he would prove to him that it was a most dangerous undertaking.

Placing his fingers to his lips, in spite of the universal desire for caution, he gave two quick, shrill blasts.

Instantly, to the surprise of George, the Indians sprung up from the grass upon every side, their ponies pricked up their ears, and held their heads high, while, worse still, the snow-white animal upon which he was mounted gave a low neigh and bounded away like the wind in the direction of his master.

"I wish I had walked," was the first utterance of George; but he tried in every way to check the flying animal, and in vain.

He might as well have pulled upon a post, for the pony had an iron jaw, and go to his master he would.

A cry from several warriors he passed showed that he was recognized as no Indian, and a shot or two, and several arrows were fired at him, but they fortunately did not hit him.

To throw himself to the ground, would be to meet certain death, so he remained on the horse, and dashed right up to the owner of the animal, who was now surrounded by numerous warriors, while a tall form near him, in a pro-

fusion of feathers, evidently was speaking in anger as George rode up.

To fire upon that crowd would be certain death, and in token of submission George held up his hands, and kept his seat, while half a hundred savage faces peered into his own, and a dozen hands grasped him rudely, and as many weapons covered his heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO CAPTIVES.

THAT George Powell's life would have been forfeited right then and there, by the infuriated chief Prairie Snake, whose pony he had appropriated, was certain; but a stern command from the tall Indian who now stepped forward, stayed the hand that would have killed.

In spite of his terrible danger the natural humor of the boy broke out in a remark addressed to himself at the moment of his supreme peril.

"Well, this is more Indian than I ever hoped to enjoy," he said.

In good English the Indian then spoke to the boy.

"Who are you?" he asked, still holding Prairie Snake back.

"My name is Powell," was the cool, almost impudent reply.

"What care I for your name. I asked who you were that thus came into my camp?"

"You are mistaken, chief, you came into my camp, and as I was a little crowded, I sought to leave it, when I got caught."

The chief seemed struck with the cool manner of the boy and drawing closer took a good look at him.

"You are a boy," he said.

"That's what I pass for, Mister Lo."

The stern face of the Indian relaxed into a smile, and he asked:

"Well, if I mistake not you are the youth on the black horse we saw at sunset, and who saved that girl by risking your life."

"I am; but did you capture her?"

"Curses! no!"

"You talk like a white man, unless Texas Indians swear."

"No, I am an Indian, but I was a long time a captive among the whites, and they taught me to swear," was the quick response.

"Well, white, black or red, what are you going to do with me?"

"Kill you."

"What have I done to you?"

"You are a pale-face."

"If that's the trouble I wish I was a red-skin just now."

"You'll be less brave when you have to die," said the chief.

George shook his head dubiously, and the chief asked:

"Do you belong at the ranch?"

"No, but I hope to."

"Where are you going?"

"To the Hume ranch."

"Where are you from?"

"New York; ever been there?"

The chief did not answer the question, but said sternly:

"Let the Prairie Snake take his pale-face captive, but he must not kill him."

"The Prairie Snake hears," was the sullen reply of the sub-chief, and instantly George was dragged from the back of the white pony, despoiled of his arms, and securely tied in a way that showed him little consideration was going to be shown him.

As soon as he was securely bound Blue Eye came forward and said something to the Prairie Snake in his native tongue, the result of which was that the sub-chief placed George upon his pony, mounted in front of him, and rode away, followed by nearly two-score warriors.

Presently a horse came near the white pony, and it, too, bore two riders.

A glance showed George that it was a white man, securely bound, riding behind an Indian, and he saw that he was not alone in his captivity.

CHAPTER XVII.

BLUE EYE.

WHEN Prairie Snake set out on his retreat with his two prisoners he pressed rapidly on until sunrise, and then he went at a more moderate pace, for the party had reached ten miles, in which there were fastnesses where a small party could easily defend itself against a large one.

With the first approach of dawn George Powell looked more fixedly at his fellow-captive, and found him regarding him with a curious gaze.

George saw that he was a man of fifty, possessing a military air, and most kindly face.

He was dressed in blue flannel, top boots, and a slouch hat, and looked like a man accustomed to the best walks of life.

"Are you Major Hume?" he asked, as they rode along together, wholly unheeding the scowl of Prairie Snake at his daring to address his fellow unfortunate.

"Yes, my son, I am Aleck Hume; but I fail to remember where we have met before," was the kindly rejoinder.

"We have never before met, sir, but I was on my way to see you when I discovered your daughter—"

"Hal you are then the daring young man who aided her to escape, for I heard the Indians speaking of it."

"I joined her, sir, in her flight, and when

her horse failed shared mine with her, until I knew we would be taken, so I dropped off and urged her to ride on."

"You are a noble fellow, my son, and did what few men would have done."

"I pray God Helen escaped."

"I feel confident she did, sir, for without my weight Black Bess could easily drop those Indian ponies, though she had had a long and a hard ride."

"Then Helen will soon get the rancheros and their cowboys on our trail, and I can now understand why Blue Eye remained behind and sent this red devil on with us."

"Why was it, sir?"

"To be sure of us at least, by keeping in check any force that might come in pursuit but who are you, my boy?"

"My name is George Powell, sir, and I am from New York; but I stopped some time with Judge Gervais in Tennessee, and he gave me a letter to you, and said you would start me right in Texas, for I have come here to live."

"Indeed I will, for your own sake as well as that Gervais recommends you; but I hope we will get out of this, though I have my fears."

"It is a pity you were taken."

George told him just how it happened, and then the Indian behind whom the major was riding dropped back to the rear, at a sign from the chief.

A ride of an hour more and there came in view an Indian village of several hundred tepees, and the coming of the warriors with two captives set the camp wild with excitement.

Prairie Snake carried the two prisoners to a tepee of logs, not doing one act to protect them from the insults and indignities of the squaws, and then left them, bound as they were, and with three red-skin warriors to guard them.

"I thought those squaws were going to kill us," said George, when he and the major were alone together, for the guards stood outside of the cabin.

"No; I heard Prairie Snake tell them not to go too far, for we were Blue Eye's prisoners, and he would be angry if we were hurt."

"You speak their language then, sir?"

"Perfectly, for I have been long on the border."

"And Blue Eye speaks English so well I believe he is a white man."

"No, he is a full-blooded Indian; but a missionary took him when he was a boy to live with him, having found him in a deserted Indian camp, and he taught him to read and write, and then sent him North to school."

"But the education he received, instead of benefiting him, seemed to make him worse, and he came back to his people, and at once began to struggle for a chief's place."

"To get this he had to become the bitter foe of the whites, and thoroughly acquainted with our ways and homes, he did us a great deal of damage."

"But was there no reason for him to behave so?"

"Yes, to tell you the truth, there was."

"He met my daughter, boldly asked her to marry him, and when she refused, sought to carry her off."

"I wounded him then, and he lay for weeks at the fort expected to die; but he recovered at last, and one night left, and soon after he swept through the settlements at the head of several hundred warriors."

"It was a sad blow to us, that he won a chief's rank by it."

"And he is now on another raid against the whites?"

"Yes, and the purpose he had in view you thwarted him in, for it was to capture my daughter Helen."

After some further conversation together, George managed to slip one of his small hands out of the buckskin thongs that bound him, and handed to the major the letter of Judge Gervais.

"The judge little knew, my son, where and under what circumstance this letter would reach me," said the major, sadly, as he read its contents, and having finished it looked up to again speak to his youthful fellow-captive, to find standing in the doorway none other than Blue Eye himself, the Comanche chief.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHIEF'S TERMS.

"You are back sooner than I had expected," said Major Hume with a sneer, as he beheld the chief, and his look and words caused George to turn, and he beheld before him a man of imposing mien.

He was an Indian, there was no doubting that, and stood six feet in his moccasins.

Tall and straight as an arrow, he had the shoulders of a Hercules, and the small waist of a woman, for he wore his belt of arms buckled tight around him as though proud of it.

He was dressed in fringed buckskins, leggings and hunting-shirt, and wore about his neck necklaces of bear and eagle-claws.

His moccasins were worked with porcupine-quills, stained, and beads, and his head-dress was a most gorgeous affair of dyed feathers, and fell down his back almost to his feet, while, being free, it swayed gracefully with his every motion.

His belt was of leather, and along the bottom was a ghastly fringe, for it was of scalps, from the flaxen curl of an infant and golden tress of a woman, to the gray hair of some man who had passed his four-score years.

This fringe went two-thirds around, but

there was a space of a few inches on the left side that had not been filled, but the holes for others yet to come had been cut there.

The arms of this remarkable-looking chief were a pair of revolvers and knife of the latest pattern.

But, strangest of all was that his eyes were dark blue, and really beautiful in their expression.

His face was Indian, and would have been noble, but for its cruel and sinister look, and his hair, blue-black, and contrary to that of his race, was very fine and soft, while he wore it hanging in a mass down his back, and falling below his belt.

"Yes; I came back as soon as I found my trip a useless one, Major Hume," he answered in dignified tones, and at the same moment he stepped forward, and took the letter from the bound hands of his captive, which caused the major to say, as he saw the chief coolly reading it:

"Your training among the whites should have taught you that it was wrong to read a letter not your own."

"Yes, I did learn that among your people, but saw that they never carried it into practice, any more than they did other things that they taught."

"I learned also, my dear major, that the pale-faces profess friendship and feel hatred for one another, and live a different life in public from what they do in secret, while they rob themselves rich from their fellow-men."

"That we Indians do not do."

George gazed at the Indian chief in surprise, while the major said:

"You are as great a moralizer, Blue Eye, as you are a villain; but you say your expedition was unsuccessful?"

"Yes."

"Why, you have two captives here!"

"True, and one, I see by this letter, is a plucky boy indeed, for your friend tells how he saved him."

"I knew last night he had nerve in him, and I feel sorry his career is to end so soon after his arrival in Texas."

"Do you intend to kill him, as your remark implies?"

"That depends upon you."

"I will do all I can to save him."

"And yourself, too?"

"Certainly."

"We shall see, Major Hume, just what you will do."

"Now tell me, do you know what my raid was intended for?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Some devilry, of course," bluntly said the major.

"No; it was to carry out the wish of my heart."

The major turned pale at this, and Blue Eye smiled.

"Will you that I shall tell you what that wish is?"

"Yes," almost gasped the major.

"It is to capture your lovely daughter and make her my wife."

"Fiend! if my arms were free I would kill you," said the major, hoarsely.

"No, you could do no such thing; but, Major Hume, I have loved your daughter since I first saw her, three years ago.

"I gave her an honorable love and she refused it.

"I sought to make her my wife by force, believing that then she would love me, but you came and nearly gave me my death wound.

"I have not forgotten that, Major Hume, nor have I forgotten my love for your daughter.

"Last night that boy thwarted me, or I would have then captured her, so I have a debt of revenge to settle with him."

"Thank God, he did save her," ejaculated the major, fervently.

"Well, you can save your life now, and that boy's, if you desire to."

"How can I?"

"Agree to my terms."

"What are they?"

"Send for your daughter to meet you at a given point, which I will name, and let the chaplain of the fort and a guide alone accompany her."

"Well, Blue Eye?"

"I will meet her there with you and this boy, and but two warriors.

"Then, if she consents to be my wife, you and this boy are free."

"Devil! begone from my sight," cried the major.

"Oh, yes, I will leave you to think the matter over; but at sunset I will come for your answer to my terms," and wheeling on his heel Blue Eye left the cabin.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SACRIFICE.

FOR a long time after the departure of Blue Eye, Major Hume and George Powell sat in silence, but at last the former said:

"My young friend, I wish I could save you, but I cannot, for that man will surely visit upon us certain death, when he returns to know how I despise to save myself at the sacrifice of my daughter."

"You think he will surely kill us?"

"I know it."

"How?"

"By the vilest torture Indian devilry can invent."

George was silent for awhile, and then suddenly brightened up, for a thought had flashed through his mind.

That thought he made known to Major Hume, and they talked earnestly together until the sunset hour, when Blue Eye again put in an appearance.

His brow was black, and evidently he had had something to trouble him, and the major, noticing an excitement in the village, surmised that a band of cowboys had followed the Indian trail back; but he knew the utter impossibility of their attempting to come on into the hills to attack the red-skin camp.

"Well, Major Hume, I have come for my answer," was the remark of the chief.

"Had any trouble to-day, Blue Eye?" asked the major with a smile, ignoring his first remark.

The chief started and asked:

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Oh! I only noticed that you looked like a thunder-cloud, and that there had been some excitement in camp."

"Well, you are right, I have had trouble, for a party pursuing us have captured half-a-dozen of my braves."

"Good! now I suppose you will exchange us for them?"

"I will not, for they sent in to ask it, and I refused."

The major looked blank, and the chief asked:

"Are you ready to agree to my terms, Major Hume?"

"Repeat them."

"The death of yourself and that boy by torture, or your daughter to become my wife?"

"Chief, I'll be frank with you," said Major Hume, as though moved by some sudden impulse.

"I wish you to be," was the cold response.

"Well, I love life, and I know this poor boy must, for he is just entering upon the threshold of life; but, if I thought I was making such a terrible sacrifice of my daughter, in giving her to you, I would rather die than yield.

"But the truth is, Blue Eye, Helen has always liked you, and it was my command that made her refuse you."

"Liked me? so I have ever believed," said the chief with a glad glitter in his eyes.

"Yes, and she acted a part against you only at my command, and now, as I feel that she is willing to become your wife, I will accept your terms upon certain conditions."

"Name them, Major Hume," and the chief could hardly conceal his joy.

"You are a very handsome man, can be the courtly gentleman when you wish, speak English as well as I do, and it is no wonder that a romantic girl should love you, and, as

you know, it will not be the first case of an Indian marrying a pale-face, for my young friend here tells me his grandfather was an Indian chief.

"But, Blue Eye, you have it in you, as the husband of my child, to make peace on the border with the whites; and you must do it."

"I will, Major Hume, I pledge you the word of an Indian chief."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Blue Eye, and I'll give you my terms."

"Well, sir?"

"I am to remain in your charge, while my young friend here, mounted upon your best mustang, and leading another, will go to my daughter with a letter from me, which will bid her come to a certain point where you will meet her, and I will accompany you."

"Why not have her come here?"

"Because to our people it must look like a capture, you understand, but, after she is your wife, then she can say she is happy as such, and you can bury the hatchet along the border."

"When will she come?"

"This youth will start to-night, and to-morrow he will reach my ranch."

"To-morrow night he can start back with Helen, and we will meet them half-way."

"She will return with you, and, I will go back with my young friend here; but you must have the Mexican padre from the river ranch not many miles from your village, to perform the ceremony, for you can go by there, as all you Indians are on good terms with him."

"Yes, he is a white man who does us no harm," said the chief.

"Well, so let it be arranged."

"So let it be, and, I must say, major, you are wise."

"If I did not feel that Helen would be happy, I would rather die, than consent to an act to give her sorrow," said the major impressively.

The chief stepped forward and at once freed the bonds that held George Powell, and then turned to the major and did likewise.

"You, my young friend, can start on your errand, as soon as you have had food, and you, Major Hume, must remain here under guard, though I have cut your bonds."

"If the boy fails to return with your daughter, you shall die by torture, sir, and I swear I will visit a fearful vengeance upon him if I track him to the ends of the earth, and this whole border shall run red from my hatred."

The chief then left the cabin, followed by George, who walked lame from his having been tied so securely.

But after a good supper, furnished him by the chief, he mounted a splendid mustang, and with his own arms, returned to him by his captor, started upon his mission.

CHAPTER XX.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

AN Indian guide had been ordered by the chief, to see the youth well on his way, and then give directions which would prevent his going wrong, for though an apt student in prairie craft, George was by no means yet a skilled trailer, though he had relied upon himself to find the Hume ranch, when he had started there from the Red river.

Whether it was that there were warriors in the camp, who did not like the secret way in which Blue Eye was managing his prisoners, or not, I cannot say; but certain it is that a party of six started in pursuit of the youth, determined to overhaul him, as soon as the guide had left him to go the rest of the way alone.

It was just at sunrise that the Indian, who spoke a few words of English, drew rein, and said:

"Boy pale-face go now, find way by self."

"Hawk go back to village, tell chief boy pale-face all right."

"Shall I follow this trail, Hawk?" asked George, pointing to a faint trail leading to the north.

"Yes, follow him to where chief caught boy pale-face."

"Him know way there bimeby."

George handed the Indian a silver dollar, that seemed to tickle him greatly, and rode on alone.

But hardly had he gone far, when he heard hoof-falls behind him, and turning in his saddle saw six warriors coming on at a gallop.

Observing that they were discovered, one of them cried out in English, such as it was:

"Boy chief stop. Blue Eye chief want tell 'um much."

Now George Powell was in a situation to be suspicious, and he certainly suspected the party behind him.

If they had come right on the trail after him, why had they not met the guide, and he returned with them?

He had heard all that Blue Eye had to say, and could not think of anything that he might have had to say, that was important enough to send six warriors after him.

So he called back:

"No, I don't want to hear any word from the chief."

"Chief kill him if him don't stop," yelled the spokesman of the party.

"I guess I'll be killed if I do. You are a hard-looking set, so I'll move on."

With that he urged his horse into a slow gallop, when at once the six warriors pressed their ponies into a run.

George at once set out at full speed, and was glad to see that he held his own with them.

But they had set a killing pace and George

was forced to keep 't, or get within range of their arrows, for they held their bows ready.

It was evident that the red-skins did not care to trust themselves too near the settlements, and were determined to close matters as soon as they could, for they urged their ponies to a speed that no animal could keep up long, and they had picked their horses before starting.

The mustang that George rode was a fleet one too, and by hard urging managed to hold his own; but the youth saw that he was becoming greatly distressed, and began to look about for a place of shelter, in which he could remain and keep his foes at bay with his rifle.

A run of a couple of miles more and he recognized the scene of his flight with Helen Hume three days before, and he was glad to know that he was on the direct trail to the ranch.

But his pony, though urged to his utmost, was only going in a slow, tired lope, and suffering greatly, could do no more.

There was a heavy rise of the prairie before him, and to aid him over this, George sprang lightly to the ground and ran by his side; but this did not seem to revive the animal, and glancing behind him after he mounted, the youth saw that the Indians had followed his example to relieve their ponies of their weight.

The leading red skin was now almost in arrow range, and George felt that he would now have to use his rifle to keep them at bay.

Suddenly his pony stumbled badly, and hardly recovered himself before he went half down with his rider.

"I am sorry to leave you, pony, but I can do better than this myself," cried the youth, and he got his rifle in hand, and at the next stumble of the animal, who was not going faster than a jog trot, he sprang to the ground, and started off at a run.

As he did so he noticed that the leading Indian had also deserted his horse, and another was just doing so.

Girding himself to the hard work, George ran on at a swift though easy pace, for he had always been noted as a rapid and long runner, and saw that he was holding his own with both horse and footmen.

But he carried his blanket, belt of arms, and rifle, and these began to get very heavy.

The blanket he threw away, but his arms he dared not let go, and when at last he knew he could go no further, he suddenly turned to the right about, threw forward his rifle and fired.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT BAY.

GEORGE was too much shaken by his long and hard run to take good aim, and his bullet missed its mark.

Not discouraged, however, he walked on, to regain his wind and nerve, just going fast enough to keep the tired Indians from rushing upon him.

All of them but one were now on foot, and they seemed elated at his bad aim.

The one still mounted had just gotten to the front, and his pony was gaining quite rapidly, though it was evident that he, too, could not last much longer in the race.

"I am rested a little now, and must dismount that fellow," muttered George, and, halting, he wheeled and fired.

Down went the mustang; but the red-skin rider caught on his feet, and, being fresh, started at a rapid run after the youth.

Again George fired, but without injury, and he knew that he was too shaky to take good aim.

"I know I could do better at close quarters with my revolvers, so we'll let them come up," he muttered, as he continued his rapid walk.

Slinging his rifle at his back, he loosened his revolvers ready for use, and then glanced behind him.

He saw that the leading Indian was now quite near him, and, as he looked, the red-skin sent an arrow from his bow.

It was well aimed, and George Powell tottered backward and fell, the arrow sticking apparently into his body.

Loud was the yell of exultation from the red-skins, and all with renewed strength darted forward, five in a bunch, and the one in advance some fifty feet ahead of them.

Motionless as the dead lay George, and with great bounds the leading Indian came toward him, his scalping-knife in hand, to seize the much-coveted trophy.

But suddenly the boy moved an arm, a flash and report followed, and down dropped the first red-skin that George had ever slain.

Then, with the arrow still sticking in his clothing, but not, as his foes had believed, in his body, up rose the boy at bay, a revolver in each hand, and cool and almost rested.

At once toward the red-skins he moved, and then came the whizzing of arrows and the rattle of shots, and both did harm.

Gaining the body of the dead Indian, with a strength born of his great peril, George Powell raised him in his arms, and then stood at bay.

It was a thrilling picture, with the boy standing upright, both hands held straight out before him, and each grasping a revolver, while his own arms passed under the arm-pits of the dead Indian upheld as a shield before him.

The head of the red-skin was drooped forward, his chin resting upon his broad, tawny breast, and his buckskin-clad legs were limp.

"Now, red-skins, your arrows have got to be sharp to go through this tough breastwork,

so fire away!" cried George, and his revolvers rattled forth with deadly aim.

It lasted but an instant, the hot and unequal fight, but in that time George was several times wounded, though slightly, the "tough breast-work," as the boy called his Indian shield, had a score of arrows sticking in him, and three of the red assailants lay dead, while the remaining two were making rapid tracks on the back trail.

"Run, red-skins, run! or I'll catch and sell you for a tobacco-store sign," shouted George, in high-gee, and he went into a loud laugh, which was, to his alarm, echoed behind him.

Quickly he turned, still keeping his human shield up before him, and beheld several horsemen gazing upon him with surprise, amazement and admiration.

They had just ridden over the rise of the prairie, and it was seeing them that caused the two Indians who had not fallen under the youth's fire, to turn in rapid flight.

There were a dozen horsemen in all, frank-faced, though wild-looking fellows, and that they were herders, now known as cowboys, no one who had once seen these lively Texas youths, could doubt.

They were all well mounted, thoroughly armed, and looked like a dangerous party to meet in a fight, and in truth they were, as the Indians well knew.

Riding forward the leader said in a cheery tone:

"Well, young feller, you is having a picnic all to yourself; but git on my mustang an' go arter yonder two scalps as is glidin' away so rapid, fer they is your meat."

"No; I will not kill a man that is running from me," said George, dropping his Indian shield.

"But they is Injuns."

"It makes no difference, I will not shoot an Indian unless he is trying to kill me."

"Lordy! is you a Sunday-school kid?"

"No."

"Is you the feller as help Miss Helen out o' a scrape some nights ago?"

"Yes."

"Then you is our pard, an' she sent us ter look fer yer, an' we hes looked, an' heur yer is."

"An' Lordy! hain't yer been in biz fer yersef?"

"I do declar', scalps will go down in ther market."

"Tim, jist scalp ther reds fer ther young gent, an' Bob, you an' Dick sail out arter them two red pedestrians an' twist ther ha'r' around yer fingers."

"We will wait yer heur, fer I wishes a leetle talk with this boss young pilgrim, as holds up Injun meat fer a targit fer other reds ter practise on."

George joined in the laugh of the cowboys, and wholly out of danger now, was only too willing to meet the band of herders, who, when the two sent after the fugitive red-skins returned with their scalps, and the dead-beat-out ponies, escorted the youth back to the Hume ranch in triumph.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT THE RENDEZVOUS.

THAT Blue Eye was greatly pleased over what Major Hume had told him was evident, and he visited his prisoner over and over again to learn all his reasons for believing that Helen loved him.

His English education, and association among whites, had caused him to feel disgust, almost, for the maidens of his own people, who, on the contrary were most anxious to win the heart of the great chief.

With all the cunning of his race, he had also the indomitable pluck of Indians, and these qualities, added to his knowledge of military tactics had gained for him the admiration of his warriors, which his cruelties had increased to idolatry almost.

That he was treacherous at heart he showed by ordering secretly a band of warriors to a point near the rendezvous, to be within reach should they be needed, for he could not but fear treachery on the part of the youth who had gone to carry out his mission.

With most unusual care, though always neat, a quality he had learned from the whites, he dressed himself to meet his bride, leaving off the war-paint that an Indian warrior thinks adds to his beauty, but bedecking himself with necklaces of gold and silver, and wearing his best buckskin suit.

He was also mounted upon his best horse, and as Major Hume, bound hand and foot once more, rode by his side, he glanced into the face of the Indian chief and noted there its look of intense satisfaction with himself.

It was just sunset when they arrived at the rendezvous, the chief, Major Hume and one Indian warrior: but the others had not arrived.

A low word from Blue Eye to the brave with him, sent that red skin off on a mission, but what, Major Hume had not heard.

He pretended not to notice the disappearance of the red-skin, hoping to catch his words to his chief upon his return, for he did not doubt but that Blue Eye had other warriors within call.

In half an hour the brave returned, and the keen ear of the major heard the low report:

"The Prairie Snake and his warriors are there."

"That devil means treachery of some kind," muttered the major, and he kept his eyes out

upon the prairie, to notice the first coming of his daughter and the youth.

As the minutes crept by and they did not come, both Blue Eye and the major became nervous, and dropping his stoicism the chief paced to and fro with angry face and lips set, for he found that something had gone wrong.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A DIAMOND THAT CUT A DIAMOND.

"THERE they come!"

It was the keen ear of the chief that had caught the fall of hoofs upon the prairie, and soon three dark forms came in sight, riding slowly.

As they drew nearer both Major Hume and Blue Eye saw that one was a woman, and a second was recognized as George Powell, but the third was unknown.

"It is my daughter and the boy, chief, and the third must be a cowboy from the ranch," said the major.

Blue Eye gave a grunt of gratification, and bending over quickly released the major of his bonds, saying quietly:

"I do not wish your daughter to greet you in bonds."

It was a clear star-light night, and as the party came up, the major rode forward and said:

"Oh, Helen! my child, do you agree to this sacrifice?"

"Yes, father," was the low reply.

"You do this to save me?"

"I do, father."

"Helen, pause before you take the step, for I can go back with the chief and let him do his worst, rather than that you should so sacrifice yourself."

"Hold on, Major Hume, for I consider that your daughter makes no sacrifice.

"I am an Indian, yes; but I am chief of a mighty people, and my name has made the pale-faces along this whole border tremble."

Blue Eye spoke in a most pompous, boastful tone, and the major answered hotly:

"You are a villainous wretch, who has stained his hands with the blood of women and children, and should be hanged for your deviltries."

"I will not quarrel with you, sir, for I am what I am.

"Miss Hume, I greet you, and I offer you the love, the hand of Blue Eye, the chief, and ask you to become my queen.

"Will you accept and go with me to my village?"

"Yes," came the low reply.

Major Hume muttered an oath, but turning to his daughter said softly:

"Helen, you have made a great sacrifice,

and have saved me, and from my heart I feel your noble act.

"Remember, I am ever your father, and if you tire of the life you have chosen, come to me.

"Farewell!"

He leaned over from his horse and drew her head upon his shoulder for an instant, and then she uttered some few words in a low voice, and rode quickly to the side of the chief, who gave a wild shout of joy at his grand triumph, and said:

"Come, my beautiful queen of the Comanches, and I will teach you how to hate the pale-faces from whom you come.

"Major Hume, go! But remember, Blue Eye, the Comanche, never buries the hatchet he has once taken up against a foe."

He seized the bridle-rein of the maiden's horse as he spoke, and motioning to the warrior to lead the way, he moved off, saying aloud:

"Now, my queen, we will be escorted to our home by two-score brave warriors, who lie hidden not far from here."

The maiden suddenly drew rein and asked in a low, trembling voice:

"What! Are you treacherous, Blue Eye?"

"Yes, to all pale-faces except you, my queen," was the ringing reply.

"Then thus I punish you for your crimes, Blue Eye!"

The words rung out in startlingly clear and commanding tones, and following them came the crack of a revolver, and then a second report, the two shots illumining the scene momentarily.

The first shot was at the head of the chief, and the bullet struck him squarely between the eyes, killing him instantly.

The second shot was at the astounded warrior, whose heart was pierced by the unerring bullet.

Before Blue Eye could fall from his saddle his head was seized in the hands of his slayer, and the long scalp lock, with its feather of crimson attached, was cut from his head.

Then, springing to the ground, the maiden did a like service for the warrior, and with her gory trophies sprang nimbly into the saddle and dashed away, while wild war-cries were heard in a distant ravine, as Prairie Snake and his warriors, alarmed by the shots, came hastening to the rescue.

As the maiden dashed forward, mounted upon a large black mare, Major Hume, who with his two comrades had halted, apparently waiting for him, cried:

"Nobly done, my brave boy, and you have rid the border of a monster and saved my darling child and myself."

"Yes, I do indeed owe you more than life," cried a soft, sweet voice, and the one supposed to be George Powell spurred to the side of the person who had successfully played so bold a game.

"Let me offer yer my grip, Boy Pard," cried the other individual of the party, and who was none other than the leader of the cowboys, who had with his comrades come upon George Powell after his fight with the Indians several days before.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the supposed Helen Hume, as the party sped along:

"I nearly broke up, Major Powell, at your affecting farewell; but I'd give my rifle to be out of these petticoats and be back in my pants, which Miss Helen is wearing."

"Never mind, George, you have done good service in my clothing so you need not be ashamed of them, and I only wish I could have played you half as well; but hark how those Indians yell," said Helen Hume, whose representation of George Powell was equally as good as was his of her.

"They have come upon the dead body of their chief, and now we must ride for it," cried the major.

And ride for it they did, and in safety reached the ranch, thanks to the daring ruse of George Powell to save himself, the major, and Helen, and at the same time rid the border of its most fiendish human monster, Blue Eye, the Comanche.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COWBOY CHIEF.

FROM the moment of his reaching Hume ranch, George Powell became a hero.

His fame spread along the border like wild-fire, and some enthusiastic cowboy dubbed him the Boy Terror, and to his great regret the name clung to him.

His fight with the Comanches, when he used one as a shield became also the general talk, and his clever ruse to escape with Major Hume out of the clutches of Blue Eye, and at the same time rid the border of that terror, was exalted to the skies.

Major Hume felt that he could not do too much for the brave boy, and knowing that his desire was to lay a foundation for a fortune, he at once determined to set him up upon a ranch, and make him a present of it and the cattle.

But this George would not hear to, for he would accept no favors, so the major tried another plan, and one day said to the youth:

"George, I have bought an old ranch, some hundred miles west of this, and wish to stock it with cattle, and put a good person there in charge, allowing him a few cowboys.

"Now, you have been with me long enough to understand the business, and I'll make you the offer to run the ranch for me, and you can select what men you please."

This was what George liked, and ten days after he started for the ranch, and with four cowboys under him, drove several hundred head of cattle along with him.

He found the place considerably dilapidated, so at once set to work to remedy this, and it was but a few weeks before the young cowboy chief had a most comfortable home of it.

As the ranch was in the vicinity of where wild mustangs roamed in large droves, George took the idea into his head of catching the animals, and thus begin a little business upon his own hook.

In riding he yielded to no one as a superior, and he also threw the lariat with great skill; but one of his men showed him the knack of catching wild horses, and he soon became a most efficient pupil, and when Major Hume visited the ranch, six months after George had gone there, he found the place most comfortable, his cattle thriving well, and the youth the owner of over a hundred mustangs which his skill had roped in.

Mustangs happened to be just what Major Hume wanted, and he bought the drove there and then, and paid the highest price they would bring in the market, and George Powell had laid the corner-stone of a fortune, he really believed.

Upon that ranch the youth passed several years, and in that time his name spread far and wide for daring and Indian-fighting, for he had organized several bands of cowboys into a company, and becoming known as the Cowboy Chief, made many successful attacks upon the red-skins, who were most troublesome all along the border.

But George found the care of a ranch too confining for one who wished to be constantly on the go, only prairie and mountain, and hence gave up his position, and sold out what cattle and mustangs he had to the major.

The money, amounting to a couple of thousand dollars, he banked in his mother's name, and then set forth upon new fields of adventure, until his wanderings won for him the names of the Boy Wanderer and Prairie Wanderer, for scarcely was he ever a week in one place, but passed his days and nights continually upon the plains.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NIGHT-HAWKS.

ABOUT the time that George Powell became a prairie rover, wandering wherever he cared to go, over Texas, through the Indian Territory, and up into Colorado and Nebraska, he returned to Texas, after an absence of nearly

a year, to find that a band of outlaws known as the Night-Hawks had begun to spread consternation along the Rio Grande country for miles and miles.

Their depredations extended back from the river a long way, and in spite of the most strenuous efforts to capture them, they invariably escaped.

One of their peculiarities, and which gave them their name, was the fact that they struck their blows only in the night, and no one had seen them by day.

George had now grown into a tall, handsome young man of nineteen, and was noted as a daring and skillful plainsman.

He had met with many thrilling adventures in his wanderings, and yielded to no one the palm of lasso throwing, riding and shooting with rifle or revolver.

He was most temperate, genial in his manners, attended to his business, and allowed no one to interfere with his.

In encounters in which he had been engaged he had never been the aggressor; but once drawn into a fight he was known to be the last man out of it.

In trading, trapping and other callings, he had been successful, and his bank account had steadily increased until, having the money, he had decided to buy a ranch in Texas and send for his mother and brother to live with him, for, after his first successes he had written them of his good fortune.

In all his wanderings, he had seen no place more desirable to locate than in Texas, near the Rio Grande, and this was the place that was now infested with the Night-Hawk Marauders.

His friend of old, Judge Gervais, had bought a ranch there, and his son was living upon it, and several pleasant visits had George made there, and talked over old times in Tennessee.

Then, too, Major Hume had given up his ranch further east and established himself not far from the Gervais hacienda, and Helen, who had married an army officer, was also living in the fort near by, so that George felt that he would be in the midst of friends.

Yet a curse had fallen upon this fair land in the raidings of the Night-Hawks.

Some said they were Texans, others called them Mexicans, and a few thought them Indians; but whatever they were, they raided with success, pillaged thoroughly, and left no one alive behind them to tell who or what they were.

When George returned from the up-country, he selected a most desirable locality for his ranch; but it was so near the striking point of the Night-Hawks, that many urged him not to stay there.

But George was not one to be turned from

his purpose from fear of personal danger, and he went on with his work.

A lovely site was selected for the cabin home, and workmen from the nearest village were sent there and set to work.

In a couple of weeks a large and comfortable cabin had gone up, outbuildings, stockades for the cattle, and a hut on the river for the cowboys.

Then cattle were bought; ponies caught, and all went into working order.

"Well, George, you are all ready, I see," said Major Hume, who with young Gervais and his son in-law, Captain Saterlee, had been hunting in the neighborhood.

"Yes, sir, all ready, and you must remain with me for the night."

They accepted this invitation, and were delighted with the ranch, its new furniture and all; but they shook their heads dubiously, as they could not but feel it was a good bait for the Night-Hawks.

"When do you expect to send for your mother and brother, George?" asked the major.

"As soon as I have captured the Night-Hawks."

"Then we need never expect to see them," said Captain Saterlee, who had been a dozen times after the Night-Hawk Marauders, without success.

"Oh yes sir, for I go on the trail of the Night-Hawks to-morrow," answered George coolly.

"Indeed! with what troop?"

"None, sir."

"Then you have raised a company of cowboys?"

"No, sir."

"You do not mean to say you go alone?" asked the major in surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"You are mad, George."

"I think not, sir, for I have kept my eyes open of late, and I think I have a clew that will aid me to work on."

"Well, George, I have great confidence in you, and I say go ahead; but I wish you would let us into the secret to aid you," said Major Hume.

"I will at the proper time, sir; but a month from to-day my brother and Billy will be here, and my brother Frank too I hope, who you know is making a big name for himself, and I want you all to come over to my ranch for a week or two of sport, and Captain Saterlee, you and Mr. Gervais must bring your wives, for my cabin is large enough you see for all."

"Thank you, George, Mrs. Saterlee will be only too glad to come, for you know she calls you her adopted brother."

"And Mrs. Gervais too, I thank you, George, but in one month, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"And in that time you expect to capture this band of Night-Hawks?" asked the major.

"I do, sir," was the resolute response of George Powell, the young ranchman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

KIDNAPPED.

SOME thirty miles from the ranch of George Powell, dwelt a young man by the name of Hart Herndon.

Of his antecedents little was known by his neighbors, for he had neighbors, though none nearer than half a dozen miles.

He had come to Texas, won a ranch and cattle at cards, and taken possession of it.

He was handsome, but dissipated, and those who knew him liked him.

One afternoon as he sat on his cabin piazza smoking, and with a bottle of Mexican wine and glass at his elbow he saw a horseman approaching his house.

He eyed him closely for a moment, and then rising, said to himself:

"I'll take a look through my glass at him."

He got a glass from a bracket inside the door and leveling it out upon the prairie, said:

"It is that dashing young fellow the Prairie Wanderer."

"I like him, and will cultivate him, for they say he has a snug little bank account down in Galveston."

It was George Powell, and dismounting, he was warmly welcomed by Hart Herndon, who brought out a second bottle, and a bundle of cigars.

"I'll smoke, Herndon, but I never drink," said George.

"A Texan never drink?" asked the other in surprise.

"Yes, it is a habit I have never formed, and never expect to; but I want you to go over to my ranch with me, and see a fellow I have there, and whom I suspect of being a Night-Hawk."

"No, you don't mean it!"

"Yes, he came to my ranch with about thirty cattle and a dozen ponies to sell, and I believe he stole them. I told him I would buy the lot, but he must wait until I got the money, and on my way back from the village, I thought I would stop and ask you to go over and have a look at him, as they say that you got a glimpse of them one night."

"Yes, I was camping in a clump of timber one night, when in rode a gang of men."

"I was walking fortunately, so climbed up a tree and staid there until daylight, when they left, and who they were, if not Night-Hawks, I cannot tell."

"Then you saw many of their faces?"

"Yes."

"And would know those you saw, if brought before them?"

"Yes."

"Then come over with me, and we'll have a look at my man."

Hart Herndon was most willing, for he had just said he wished to cultivate George Powell.

So off the two young men rode together, and it was sunset when they reached the Powell ranch.

"Well, Powell, you are fixed up fine here, and will be as happy as a clam at high tide," said Herndon, when he entered the cabin and glanced around him at the comfortable home.

"Yes, it is all very nice; but if the Night-Hawks took it into their heads to pay me a visit, it would all vanish in a night," answered George.

"Yes, and you and your cowboys lose your lives too."

"By the way, Powell, how many cowboys have you here?"

"Four, which will be enough, for my cattle, when my brother Billy comes on to help me."

"Yes, but they must be on the alert, for you tempt the Night-Hawks here."

"I do not fear them; but be seated, while I look up my man."

Hart Herndon threw himself into a rustic rocking-chair, and, tired by his long ride, sunk into a nap.

He was awakened by feeling a cold object touch his forehead, and, to his amazement, saw George Powell in front of him, and holding a revolver, the muzzle of which was pressed against his head.

"You are my prisoner, Hart Herndon!" said George, quietly.

"Great God! Powell, what do you mean?"

"Are you mad?"

"No, I am in my good senses, as you shall know."

"Come, Kit, tie this man."

A tall cowboy came into the room, smiling, and with a rawhide lariat proceeded to tie the astounded man securely.

He was an adept at the work, and bound him in the chair in a manner that admitted of no movement even.

Then he laid the prisoner's belt of arms upon the table.

"You shall rue this work, Powell," said Hart Herndon, savagely.

"I guess if there is any *ruing* done you'll do it, Herndon."

"Call in the other boys, Kit," said George.

Two more cowboys now entered, and between them was a man of large size and sinister face.

At sight of him Hart Herndon turned pale.

"Well, Herndon, here is the man of whom I spoke."

"He came to me asking for work, and I engaged him as a cowboy, and, suspecting him from the first, I have devoted my time to watching him.

"I sent him off to buy some cattle for me, and he returned with them; but, in disguise, I had followed him, and I know he got them from a corral where stolen cattle are driven, their brands effaced, and new ones put on.

"Then I got him into my power, made him a prisoner, and found on him a strange letter, which I interpreted into a document that would hang him.

"I offered him his life if he would confess all, and threatened to kill him if he did not.

"The villain confessed all I cared to know, and then I went after you.

"Now what have you to say for yourself?"

"I never saw the man!" was the sullen reply.

"I hate to tell a prisoner he lies, but you do, and you know it.

"I know all that you are, and that you had me marked for the next midnight visit of the Night-Hawks, and after that the ranches of Major Hume and Mr. Gervais were to be laid in ashes and their owners slain.

"You are the Night-Hawk chief, Hart Herndon, and you shall die for it, but you may have your choice of death, either by being shot or hanged, or dying by fearful torture if you wish."

Evidently realizing that he need not deny further who and what he was, Hart Herndon asked with a sneer:

"Well, what am I to do for this favor you grant me, of choosing my mode of death?"

"Write your usual orders to each one of your band, commanding them to come to this ranch on a certain night."

"That is, betray them?"

"Yes."

"I will not."

"I already know who they are, and one by one could capture them, for this man has given me a list of their names and the ranches they live on.

"But he tells me they obey no orders unless they come from you and are written in a peculiar manner."

"The treacherous hound!" said Herndon.

"Oh, you would confess as he has to save your life, and I now ask you to simply write your men an order to come here, if you do not care to go out of life by torture an Indian will invent, for I shall give you up to the Apaches."

Hart Herndon turned deadly pale at this, and said:

"If I do as you wish, I can have my choice of death?"

"Yes."

"If I confess all, will you spare my life?"

"No, for I know all."

"That man does not know all."

"Oh, yes he does, or at least he knows enough to satisfy me, and I have to give him his life, which I dislike to do, as he is such a villain.

"But I have pledged him my word."

"Well, I'll do it if you let me choose the manner of my death."

"I so pledge myself to you."

"Well, I wish to commit suicide."

"What?"

"Fact. I will shoot myself with my revolver."

"A man such as you are is a dangerous person to trust with a loaded revolver."

"You have pledged yourself," eagerly said the Night-Hawk chief.

"And will keep my word, though I well know you intended to first kill me, no matter what became of you afterward.

"But I'll see to that," said George with a smile.

This seemed to hit the man hard, for that had evidently been his intention; but he asked:

"Well, give me the paper and pen and ink."

The articles were set before him and his right hand was released.

"Now write, sir!" commanded George.

The man wrote a few lines in cipher, and handed it to George Powell, who said:

"Read it, in translation!"

"You are commanded to come to the Powell Ranch, Sunset Prairie, Sunday night, at ten o'clock.

"Meet in the prairie one mile due north of ranch, and wait my coming, or command."

"CHIEF."

"Does that suit you?" asked the chief, when he had finished translating it.

"Is that right, sir?" and George handed the paper to the man who had betrayed his comrades.

He saw the man change countenance, and a gleam came into his eyes, and instantly suspected a trick.

"Does that cipher read as that man read it?" he asked, sternly.

The man hesitated, glanced at his chief and said:

"Yes."

"Kit, take this man out and tie him to a tree.

"Then lay your cattle-whip upon his bare back until he knows how to tell the truth."

"No, no! I will tell the truth, pard."

"Then did he translate that cipher right?"

"No, pard."

"How does it read?"

"That the men were to come here, where we would be found prisoners, and then we was to turn the game ag'in' you."

"Aha! Now, Sir Night-Hawk, you will

write a correct order, and I want thirteen of them, for there are fifteen in your band, and two of you are here."

"With a muttered curse the chief wrote again upon a piece of paper.

"Now, sir, how does that read?"

"Let that traitor translate it," was the savage rejoinder.

"Read it, sir!" commanded George.

The man obeyed.

"Powell Ranch, Sunset Prairie, Sunday, midnight.
"N. H. C."

"What does N. H. C. stand for?" asked George.

"Night Hawk Captain."

"Ah! and this is a correct translation?"

"Yes, pard."

"Remember, I shall not leave you here, and if it proves wrong you die."

"Oh! I hain't taking no more chances, pard, for I am in danger enough now."

"You are right!

"Here, Kit, you and Trim go and deliver these papers.

"Here is a list of the men who are to have them, and the ranches they live on.

"When you have given them all out, come by the fort and ask Captain Saterlee to return with you and bring half a dozen picked cavalrymen with him, but to keep his coming a secret."

Kit, the cowboy, took the papers, and saying that he understood fully what was to be done, left the ranch, accompanied by Trim, his comrade, while George Powell and the remaining herder remained as guards over the prisoners.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NIGHT-HAWK GEORGE.

THE Sunday night of the fatal appointment came round, and the Powell ranch was dark and gloomy, for no light was visible anywhere about it.

Out upon the prairie, a mile away, were a band of horsemen. They were thirteen in number, well mounted and armed, and were riding in single file in the direction of the ranch.

They were the Night-Hawks, and in obedience to the order of their chief, were going upon red work, as was the r wont.

They had met at a common rendezvous, and then sought the designated spot.

But two of their number was absent, their chief and one other; but it so happened that all of them could not go every time, and their leader they knew was always the guest of the ranch the night it was to be attacked.

Slowly they rode up to the shelter of the

timber, and dismounting, hitched their trails. Then, with the stealthy steps of panthers creeping upon their prey, they went forward and encircled the cabin.

One of the Night-Hawks then knocked at the door.

Instantly the darkness was illumined by red flashes, and then came the roar of guns, and more than half the number of Night-Hawks dropped dead where they stood, and before the others could fly, out of the cabin, and from the darkness of the timber, came half a dozen of soldiers led by Captain Saterlee.

At the head of his three cowboys, George Powell dashed out of the cabin, and the victory was won, for every member of the mysterious band of Night-Hawk Marauders was dead, or a prisoner.

"Bravo, my friend; for you have won a great victory, and this night I christen you Night-Hawk George," shouted Captain Saterlee, as he grasped the hand of George Powell, while three cheers were given for the gallant young Texan's new name—a name that has faithfully clung to him to this day.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

"Now, Night-Hawk George, what are we to do with these fellows, for you are the captain?" said Captain Saterlee, and he referred to the half-dozen prisoners, and among whom were Hart Herndon, the chief, and the one who had been forced to become a traitor.

"That man can go his way, for I so pledged myself, and I warn him to mount at once, and get as far away as he can under cover of the darkness, for he knows his fate, if ever he is heard of in Texas again," said George Powell.

"And the chief?"

"I owe him a pledge too which I must keep."

"What is that, Night-Hawk George?" asked the captain, addressing him by his new name.

"He has the right to choose the mode of passing in his checks."

"You have determined he shall die then without a trial?"

"Certainly, for he is guilty of half a hundred murders.

"He wishes to commit suicide."

"Ah! then no one will be to blame for his sudden taking off," said the captain, with a smile.

"Only himself, and I give him just ten minutes to do the disagreeable work," and Night-Hawk George, as I will call him now, turned to the chief of the outlaws.

He was tied to a chair in the cabin, and sat grim and white, when the lamp-light fell upon him.

"I am ready now," he said, calmly.

"You shall have time to pray," kindly responded Night-Hawk George.

"I wish no time for prayer, for it would do me no good, after all the crimes that lay at my door."

"You are frank at least, and you know best.

"Here is a revolver, and it is unloaded; but I lay here on the table one charge of powder, a bullet, and a cap.

"When we leave the cabin load it and end your wretched life.

"But if you attempt any tricks you will be shot down by one who will be watching you, though you cannot see him.

"Now, let all leave the room, and I will free this man."

Captain Saterlee and the others present obeyed, and with his knife banging over the lariat that went round the chair, Night-Hawk George said: "In one minute I expect you to take your own life.

"Now I cut your bonds, and may God have mercy upon your soul, guilty as you are."

With his last word he severed the lariat that bound his arms, and walked toward the door, his revolver ready, should the Night-Hawk chief attempt to spring upon him.

But the doomed man did not make any such an attempt.

He had nerved himself to the work before him, of calmly taking his own life, and watched as he was by those without, for he

stood in the bright light, he won their admiration, vile as he was.

With the utmost coolness he loaded the one chamber of the revolver, placed the cap on the nipple without a tremor of the hand, and then put the muzzle over his heart.

Shaking his head, as though that might not be a quick enough death, and he wished to avoid suffering, he raised the muzzle to his temple, involuntarily raised his eyes as though the awful moment had forced a prayer from him, and pulled the trigger.

With the stunning report he fell, and when Night-Hawk George knelt over him he was a dead man.

The remainder of the prisoners were taken to the fort, quietly tried and executed, and Night-Hawk George kept his word in saying he would free the country of the mysterious band, and when his mother and brother arrived at the ranch they found him enjoying the name of the outlaws he had brought to punishment.

Though a Texas ranchman, Night-Hawk George was not content to remain upon his ranch continually, and his roving disposition kept him wandering over the northern plains, prospecting in the Rocky Mountains and continually searching for new fields of adventure, and to his dying day George Powell will be a wanderer over the scenes he loves so well on the wild frontier.*

THE END.

THE DIME

SPEAKERS AND DIALOGUES.

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SERIES,

Most Available, Adaptive and Taking Collections

Declamations,
Recitations,
Speeches,
Orations,

Notable Passages,
Extempore Efforts,
Addresses,

Dialogues,
Colloquies,
Burlesques,

Farces,
Minor Dramas,
Acting Charades,
Dress Pieces,

IN ALL THE FIELDS OF

Wit, Humor, Burlesque, Satire, Eloquence and Argument,

FOR

SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS AND HOME ENTERTAINMENTS.

THE DIME SPEAKERS.

- 1—DIME AMERICAN SPEAKER.
- 2—DIME NATIONAL SPEAKER.
- 3—DIME PATRIOTIC SPEAKER.
- 4—DIME COMIC SPEAKER.
- 5—DIME ELOCUTIONIST.
- 6—DIME HUMOROUS SPEAKER.
- 7—DIME STANDARD SPEAKER.
- 8—DIME STUMP SPEAKER.
- 9—DIME JUVENILE SPEAKER.
- 10—DIME SPREAD-EAGLE SPEAKER.
- 11—DIME DEBATER & CHAIRMAN'S GUIDE.
- 13—DIME EXHIBITION SPEAKER.

- 13—DIME SCHOOL SPEAKER.
- 14—DIME LUDICROUS SPEAKER.
- 15—CARL PRETZEL'S KOMIKAL SPEAKER.
- 16—DIME YOUTH'S SPEAKER.
- 17—DIME ELOQUENT SPEAKER.
- 18—DIME HAIL COLUMBIA SPEAKER.
- 19—DIME SERIO-COMIC SPEAKER.
- 20—DIME SELECT SPEAKER.
- 21—DIME FUNNY SPEAKER.
- 22—DIME JOLLY SPEAKER.
- 23—DIME DIALECT SPEAKER.
- 24—DIME REALINGS AND RECITATIONS.

Each Speaker, 100 pages 12mo., containing from 50 to 75 pieces.

THE DIME DIALOGUES

Are filled with original and specially prepared contributions from favorite and popular caterers for the Amateur and School Stage—giving more *taking* and effective dialogues, burlesques, social comedies, domestic farces, exquisite dress and exhibition dramas than any collection ever offered at any price.

- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER ONE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWO.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER THREE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER FOUR.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER FIVE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER SIX.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER SEVEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER EIGHT.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER NINE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER ELEVEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWELVE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER THIRTEEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER FOURTEEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER FIFTEEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER SIXTEEN.

- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER SEVENTEEN, *Little Folks.*
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER EIGHTEEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER NINETEEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-ONE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-TWO.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-THREE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-SIX.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER TWENTY-NINE.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER THIRTY.
- DIME DIALOGUES NUMBER THIRTY-ONE.

Each volume, 100 pages 12mo., containing from 15 to 25 pieces.

For sale by all newsdealers; or sent, post-paid, to any address, on receipt of price—TEN CENTS EACH

THE Deadwood Dick Library

LATEST AND BEST.

HANDSOME TRI-COLORED COVERS.

32 Pages. Issued Every Wednesday.

Price 5 Cents.

Buy One and You Will Buy the Rest!

Extracts from the New York Evening Sun.

TWO REMARKABLE HEROES.

In only one sense of the word can it be regarded as a novel statement when the fact is here recorded that literature has given many heroes to the world, and perhaps more than one reader will have to think a moment over this remark before the subtle delicacy of its genial wit strikes home.

But it is most essentially a half dime novel statement that will be news to many when it is added that literature, if traced from the dimly distant days when Adam was a mere child down to the present day, would show but few heroes that in the eyes of boyhood would be even judged worthy of comparison with the two greatest heroes known to American literature, or, to promptly reveal them, Deadwood Dick and Deadwood Dick, Jr.

The modern heroes of fiction for young America, who are now as countless as the sands of the sea, and of whom the Deadwood Dicks are much the most important * * * it is but natural that their * * * should bear away the palm of popularity, and such as * * * be left far behind in the race.

It can be easily believed, therefore, that the two Dicks are so firmly engrafted on the tree of popular literature for boys and young men, that their position is assured * * * and that they stand to-day head and shoulders

above all rivals in the eyes of the public for which they have lived, and for which one of them has died.

American boyhood, and that is a tremendous factor in the land, now knows Deadwood Dick, Jr., a good deal better than it knows its catechism, and millions of young minds absorb the thrilling incidents of his career in his everlasting warfare against crime and his never-ending solving of impenetrable mysteries.

Millions of boys follow his stealthy footsteps as he tracks his vicious victims to their undoing, and then, when the victims are thoroughly undone, the millions wait hungrily for the next volume, which on every Wednesday appears with the certainty of the Wednesday itself, and a new set of delightful thrills go thrilling away from Maine to California.

There are the volumes each so crowded with thrills and heart-tugs that it were madness to hope to do justice to them collectively and rank injustice to discriminate between them.

To abandon the idea of giving a few extracts causes infinite pain, but if once a start were made in that direction, it would be cruel to *The Evening Sun's* readers to stop, and it is therefore better not to relate one single adventure. Suffice it to say that the stories are clean and well written.

DEADWOOD DICK LIBRARY.

- 1 Deadwood Dick, the Prince of the Road
- 2 The Double Daggers; or, Deadwood Dick's Defiance
- 3 The Buffalo Demon; or, The Border Vultures
- 4 Buffalo Ben, Prince of the Pistol
- 5 Wild Ivan, the Boy Claude Duval
- 6 Death-Face, the Detective
- 7 The Phantom Miner; or, Deadwood Dick's Bonanza
- 8 Old Avalanche, the Great Annihilator; or, Wild Edna, the Girl Brigand
- 9 Bob Woolf, the Border Ruffian
- 10 Omaha Oil, the Masked Terror; or, Deadwood Dick in Danger
- 11 Jim Bludsoe, Jr., the Boy Phenix; or, Through to Death
- 12 Deadwood Dick's Eagles; or, The Pards of Flood Bar
- 13 Buckhorn Bill; or, The Red Rifle Team
- 14 Gold Rifle, the Sharpshooter
- 15 Deadwood Dick on Deck; or, Calamity Jane
- 16 Corduroy Charlie, the Boy Bravo
- 17 Rosebud Rob; or, Nugget Ned, the Knight of the Gulch
- 18 Idyl, the Girl Miner; or, Rosebud Rob on Hand
- 19 Photograph Phil; or, Rosebud Rob's Reappearance
- 20 Watch-Eye, the Shadow
- 21 Deadwood Dick's Device; or, The Sign of the Double Cross
- 22 Canada Chet, the Counterfeiter Chief
- 23 Deadwood Dick in Leadville; or, A Strange Stroke for Liberty
- 24 Deadwood Dick as Detective
- 25 Gilt-Edge Dick
- 26 Bonanza Bill, the Man-Tracker; or, The Secret Twelve
- 27 Chip, the Girl Sport
- 28 Jack Hoyle's Lead; or, The Road to Fortune
- 29 Boss Bob, the King of Bootblacks
- 30 Deadwood Dick's Double; or, The Ghost of Gorgon's Gulch
- 31 Blonde Bill; or, Deadwood Dick's Home Base
- 32 Solid Sam, the Boy Road-Agent
- 33 Tony Fox, the Ferret; or, Boss Bob's Boss Job
- 34 A Game of Gold; or, Deadwood Dick's Big Strike
- 35 Deadwood Dick of Deadwood; or, The Picked Party
- 36 New York Nell, the Boy-Girl Detective
- 37 Nobby Nick of Nevada; or, The Scamps of the Sierras
- 38 Wild Frank, the Buckskin Bravo
- 39 Deadwood Dick's Doom; or, Calamity Jane's Last Adventure
- 40 Deadwood Dick's Dream; or, The Rivals of the Road
- 41 Deadwood Dick's Ward; or, The Black Hills Jezebel
- 42 The Arab Detective; or, Snoozer, the Boy Sharp
- 43 The Ventriloquist Detective. A Romance of Rogues
- 44 Detective Josh Grim; or, The Young Gladiator's Game
- 45 The Frontier Detective; or, Sierra Sam's Scheme
- 46 The Jimtown Sport; or, Gypsy Jack in Colorado
- 47 The Miner Sport; or, Sugar-Coated Sam's Claim
- 48 Dick Drew, the Miner's Son; or, Apollo Bill, the Road-Agent
- 49 Sierra Sam, the Detective
- 50 Sierra Sam's Double; or, The Three Female Detectives
- 51 Sierra Sam's Sentence; or, Little Luck at Rough Ranch
- 52 The Girl Sport; or, Jumbo Joe's Disguise
- 53 Denver Doll's Device; or, The Detective Queen
- 54 Denver Doll as Detective
- 55 Denver Doll's Partner; or, Big Buckskin the Sport
- 56 Denver Doll's Mine; or, Little Bill's Big Loss
- 57 Deadwood Dick Trapped
- 58 Buck Hawk, Detective; or, The Messenger Boy's Fortune
- 59 Deadwood Dick's Disguise; or, Wild Walt, the Sport
- 60 Dumb Dick's Pard; or, Eliza Jane, the Gold Miner
- 61 Deadwood Dick's Mission
- 62 Spotter Fritz; or, The Store-Detective's Decoy
- 63 The Detective Road-Agent; or, The Miners of Sassafras City
- 64 Colorado Charlie's Detective Dash; or, The Cattle Kings

M. J. IVERS & CO., Publishers (James Sullivan, Proprietor).

379 Pearl Street, NEW YORK.